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THE
STRAIT GATE,
OR,
Great Difficulty of Going
to HEAVEN;
PLAINLY

Proving by the Scriptures, that
not only the rude and profane; but
many great professors will come
short of that Kingdom.

By John Bunyan.

*Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the
gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to de-
struction, and many there be that go in there-
at. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is
the way that leadeth unto life, and few there
be that find it. Matt. 7. 13, 14.*

LONDON.

Printed for Francis Smith at the Elephant
and Castle near the Royall Exchange
in Cornhill. 1676.



To the R E A D E R.

Courteous Reader,

GOd (I hope) hath put it into my heart to write unto thee another time, and that about matters of greatest moment (for now we discourse not about things controverted among the godly, but directly about the saving or damning of the soul, yea, moreover this discourse is about the fewness of them that shall be saved, and it proves, that many an high professor will come short of eternal life;) wherefore the matter must needs be sharp and so disliked by some; but let it not be rejected by thee. The text calls for sharpness, so do the times, yea, the faithful discharge of my duty towards thee, hath put me upon it.

I do not now pipe but mourn, and 'twill be well for thee, if thou canst graciously lament, Matt. 11. 17. Some (say they) make the gate of heaven too wide, and some make it too narrow : for my part I have here presented thee with as true a measure of it as by the word of God I can : reade me therefore, yea, reade me and compare me with the bible ; and if thou findest my doctrine, and that book of God concur ; embrace it, as thou wilt answer the contrary in the day of Judgment : This awaking work (if God will make it so) was prepared for thee : If there be need and it wounds, get

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healing

To the Reader.

Healing by blood; if it disquiets get peace by blood: if it takes away all thou hast because 'twas naught, (for this book is not prepared to take away true grace from any) then buy of Christ gold tried in the fire, that thou maist be rich, and white rayment that thou maist be cloathed, and that the shame of thy nakedness doth not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou maist see, Revel. 3. 18 Self-flatteries, self-deceivings, are easie and pleasant, but damnable! the Lord give thee an heart to Judge right of thy self, right of this book, and so to prepare for eternity, that thou maist not only expect entrance, but be received into the kingdome of Christ and of God, Amen.

So prays thy friend,

J. B.

Luke



Luke. 13. 24.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

THese are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are therefore in an especial manner to be heeded; besides, the subject matter of the words, is the most weighty, to wit, how we should attain salvation, and therefore also to be heeded.

The occasion of the words, was a *question* which one that was at this time in the company of the disciples, put to Jesus Christ; the *question* was this, *Lord, are there few that be saved?* ver. 23. *A serious question*, not such as tended to the subversion of the hearers, as too many nowadaies do, but such as in its own nature tended to the awakening of the company to

good, and, that called for such an answer that might profit the people also: This question also, well pleased Jesus Christ, and therefore he prepareth, and giveth such an answer, as was without the least retort, or shew of distaste, such an answer I say, as carried in it the most full resolve to the question it self, and help to the persons questioning; *And he said unto them, strive to enter in, &c.* The words are an answer, and an instruction also.

1. An answer, and that in the affirmative, *the gate is strait many that seek will not be able*, therefore but few shall be saved.

2. The answer, is an instruction also, *strive to enter in, &c.* good counsel, and instruction; pray God help me, and my Reader, and all that love their own salvation to take it.

My manner of handling the words will be, first by way of *Explication*, and then by way of *Observation*.

By way of *Explication*.

1. The

1. The words are to be considered, with reference to their *general scope*.

2. And then with reference to their several phrases.

1. The *general scope* of the text is to be considered, and that is that great thing *Salvation*; for these words do immediatly look at, point to, and give directions about *salvation*. *Are there few that be saved? strive to enter in at the strait gate.*

The words, I say, are to direct us, not only to talk of, or to wish for, but to understand how we shall, & to seek that we may be effectually saved; and therefore of the greatest importance. To be saved! what, is like being saved? to be saved from sin, from hell, from the wrath of God, from eternal damnation, what is like it? To be made an heir of God! of his grace! of his kingdome and eternal glory! what is like it? and yet all this is included in this word, *saved*, and in the answer to that question, *are there few that be saved?* indeed this

word, *saved*, is but of little use in the world, *save* to them that are heartily afraid of *damning*. This word lies in the Bible, as excellent salves lie in some mens houses, thrust into a hole, and not thought on for many moneths, because the household people have no wounds nor sores : In time of sickness, what so set by, as the Doctors glasses, and gally-pots full of his excellent things ; but when the person is grown well, the rest is thrown to the dunghil. Oh when men are sick of sin, and afraid of *damning*, what a text is that, where this word *saved* is found ? yea, what a word of worth and goodness and blessedness is it to him that lies continually upon the wrath of a guilty conscience ? *but the whole need not the physician* : He therefore, and he only, knows what *saved* means, that knows, what *hell* and *death* and *damnation* means : *what shall I do to be saved* ? is the language of the trembling sinner ; *Lord save me*, is the language

language of the sinking sinner, and none admire the glory that is in that word *saved*, but such as see without being saved, all things in heaven and earth are emptyness to them, they also that believe themselves privileged in all the blessedness that are wrapped up in that word, blesse and admire God that hath saved them: wherefore, since the thing intended both in the question and the answer is no less then the salvation of the soul, I beseech you to give the more earnest heed, *Heb. 21.*

But to come to the particular phrases in the words, and to handle them orderly in the words I finde four things.

1. An intimation of the kingdom of heaven.
2. A description of the entrance into it.
3. An Exhortation to enter into it, and,
4. A motive to inferce that exhortation.

First, An intimation of the kingdom of heaven, for when he saith, *strive to enter in*; and in such phrases there is supposed a place or state or both to be enjoyed; *enter in*, enter into what, or whether but into a state or place or both; and therefore when you read this word, *enter in*, you must say there is certainly included in the text that good thing that yet is not expressed; *enter in, into heaven*, that's the meaning: where the saved are, and shall be, *into heaven*, that place, that glorious place, where God, and Christ, and Angels are: and the souls or spirits of just men made perfect: *enter in*; that thing included, though not expressed in the words, is called in another place, the *Mount Sion*; the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, *Heb. 12*. And therefore the words signifie unto us, *that there is a state most glorious, and that when this world is ended; and that*
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this place and state is likewise to be enjoyed, and inherited by a generation of men for ever. Besides, this word, *enter in*, signifieth that salvation to the full is to be enjoyed *only there*, and that there *only* is eternal safety; all other places, and conditions, are hazardous, dangerous, full of snares, imperfections, temptations and afflictions, but *there all is well*; there is no devil to tempt, no desperately-wicked heart to deliver us up, no deceitful lures to intangle, nor any enchanting world to bewitch us: *there all shall be well to all eternity*. Further all the parts of, and circumstances that attend salvation, are *only* there to be enjoyed: there *only* is immortalitie and eternal life; there is the glory, the fulness of joy, and the everlasting pleasures; there is God and Christ to be enjoyed by open vision, and more; there are the Angels, and the Saints; further, there is no death, nor sickness, no sorrow, nor sighing, for ever: there is no pain, nor persecutor,

nor

not darkness to eclipse our glory. O this *Mount Sion*! O this *heavenly Jerusalem*! 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. Psal. 16. 11. Luk. 20 35, 36. Heb. 12. 12, 23, 14.

Behold therefore what a great thing the Lord Jesus hath included by this little word, *in*, in this word is wrapt up an whole heaven, and eternal life: even as there is also by other little words in the holy Scriptures of truth; as where he saith, *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you, and the elect have obtained it.*

This should teach us, not only to reade but to attend in reading, not only to read, but to lift up our hearts to God in reading, for if we be not heedful, if he give us not light and understanding; we may easily passe over without any great regard, such a word as may have a glorious kingdom and eternal salvation in the bowels of it: yea sometimes, as here, a whole heaven is intimated, where it is not at all expressed. The Apostles of old, did use to fetch great things out

out of the Scriptures, even out of the very order and timeing of the several things contained therein, see *Rom.* 4. 9, 10, 11. *Gala.* 3. 16, 17. *Heb.* 8. 13. but,

Secondly, As we have here an intimation of the kingdom of heaven, so we have a description of the entrance into it, and that by a double similitude.

1. It is called a gate.

2. *A strait gate*: strive to enter in at the strait gate.

1. It is set forth by the similitude of a gate. A gate, you know, is of a double use, it is to open and shut, and so consequently, to let in, or to keep out; and to do both these *at the season*; as he said, *let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened till the sun be hot*; and again, *I commanded that the gates should be shut*; and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: (*Neh.* 7. 3. chap. 13. 19, 20.) And so you finde of this gate of heaven, when the five wise virgins came,

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the gates were open, but *afterward came the other virgins, and the door was shut, Matt. 11.*

So then, the entrance into heaven, is called a *gate*, to shew, there is a time when there *may be* entrance, and there will come a time *when there shall be none* ; and indeed this is a chief truth contained in the text : *strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able.*

I reade in the Scriptures of two gates or doors, through which they that go to heaven must enter.

1. *There is the door of faith*, the door which the grace of God hath opened to the gentiles, this door is Jesus Christ, as also himself doth testify, saying, *I am the door, &c. (Acts. 14.27. Joh. 10.9.)* By this door men enter into Gods favour, and mercy, and finde forgiveness through faith in his blood, and live in hope of eternal life ; and therefore himself also hath said, *I am the door, by me if any man enter*

enter in, he shall be saved, that is, received to mercy and inherit eternal life : but

2. There is another door, or gate ; (for that which is called in the text, *a gate*, is twice in the next verse, called, *a door*) : there is, I say another gate, and that is the passage into the very heaven it self ; the entrance into the celestial mansion-house, and that is the *gate* mentioned in the text, and the door mentioned twice in the verse that follows. And thus *Jacob* called it, when he said *Bethel was the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*, that is, the entrance, for he saw the entrance into heaven, *one end of Jacobs ladder stands in Bethel, Gods house, and the other end reacheth up to the gate of heaven. Gen. 28. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.* Jacobs ladder was the figure of Christ, which ladder was not the gate of heaven, but the way from the Church to that gate which he saw above at the top of the ladder : *Gen. 28. 12. and Job. 1. 51.*

But

But again that the gate in the text, is the gate, or entrance into heaven, consider,

1. It is that gate that letteth men into, or shutteth men out of that place or kingdom where *Abr. ham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob* is, which place is that paradise where Christ promised the thief, that he should be that day, that he asked to be with him in his kingdom: it is that place into which *Paul* said, he was caught, when he heard words unlawful or impossible for a man to utter, *Luk. 13. 20. chap. 23. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.*

Quest. But is not Christ the gate or entrance into this heavenly place?

Answ. He is he without whom no man can get thither, because by *his merits* men obtain that world, and also because he (as the father) is the doner and disposer of that kingdom to whom he will: further, this place is called his house, and himself the master of it. (*when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut so*
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the door (*ver. 25.*) But we use to say, that the master of the house, is not the door : men enter into heaven then, by him, not as he is the gate or door, or entrance into the celestial mansion-house, but as he is the giver and disposer of that kingdom to them who he shall count worthy, because he hath obtained it for them.

2. That this gate is the very passage into heaven, consider the text hath special reference to the day of judgment, when Christ will have laid aside his mediatory office, which before he exercised for the bringing to the faith his own elect; and will then act, not as one that justifies the ungodly, but as one that judgeth sinners; he will now be risen up from the throne of grace, and shut up the door again't all the impenitent, and will be set upon the throne of judgment, from thence to proceed with ungodly sinners.

Object. But Christ bids *strive, strive* now to enter in at the strait gate, but
if

if that *gate* be as you say, the *gate*, or entrance into heaven, then it should seem, that we should not strive till the day of judgment, for we shall not come at that gate till then.

Ans. Christ, by this exhortation, *strive*, &c. doth not at all admit of, or countenance delays, or that a man should neglect his own salvation, but putteth poor creatures upon preparing for the judgment, and counselleth them *now* to get those things that will then give them entrance into glory. This exhortation, is much like these, *be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as you think not, the son of man cometh: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Matt. 24. 44. Chap. 25. 10.*

So that when he saith, *strive to enter in*, it is as if he should say, blessed are they that shall be admitted another day to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that shall be counted worthy of so unspeakable a favour,

vour, must be well prepared, and fitted for it before-hand : now the time to be fitted, is not the day of judgment, but the day of grace ; not *then*, but *now* : therefore *strive now* for those things, that will *then* give you entrance into the heavenly kingdom : but,

Secondly, As it is called a *gate*, so it is called a *strait gate* ; *strive to enter in at the strait gate*.

The straightness of this gate, is not to be understood carnally, but mystically : you are not to understand it, as if the entrance into heaven was some little pinching wicket, no, the straightness of this gate is quite another thing. This gate is wide enough, for all them that are the truly gracious, and sincere lovers of Jesus Christ, but *so strait*, as that not one of the other can by any means enter in : *open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord, this gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter, Psal. 118. 19, 20.*
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by this word therefore Christ Jesus hath shewed unto us that without due qualifications there is no possibility of entring into heaven ; the straight gate will keep all others out: when Christ spake this parable he had doubtless his eye upon some passage or passages of the old testament, with which the Jews were well acquainted. I will mention two and so go on.

1. *The place by which God turned Adam and his wife out of paradise*; possibly our Lord might have his eye upon that, for though that was wide enough for them to come out at, yet it was too strait for them to go in at, but what should be the reason of that? why they had sinned and therefore God set at the east of that garden, *cherubins and a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life: Gen. 3, 24.* These Cherubins and this flaming sword, they made the entrance too strait for them to enter in: souls, there are Cherubins

bins and a flaming sword at the gates of heaven to keep the way of the tree of life, therefore none but them that are duely fitted for heaven can enter in at this strait gate, the flaming sword will keep all others out. *Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, be not deceived, neither fornicatours, nor Idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1. Cor. 6. 9.*

2. Perhaps our Lord might have his eye upon the gates of the temple, when he spoke this word unto the people, for though the gates of the temple were six cubits wide, yet they were so strait, that none that were unclean in any thing might enter in thereat, *Ezek. 40. 48.* because there were placed at them gates, porters whose office was to look that none but those that had right to enter, might go in thither: and so it is written,

ten,

ten, Jehoiadah set porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none that were unclean in any thing might enter in. 2 Chro. 23. 19. Souls, God hath porters at the gates of his temple, at the gate of heaven; porters, I say, placed there by God, to look that none that are unclean in any thing may come in thither. In at the gate of the Church, none may enter now, that are open profane and scandalous to religion; no, though they plead they are beloved of God; *What hath my beloved to do in mine house* (saith the Lord,) *seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many,* Jer. 11. 15.

I say, I am very apt to believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ had his thoughts upon these two texts, when he said, *the gate is strait*, and that which confirms me the more in the thing, is this, a little below the text he saith, *there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven,*

ven, and you your selves thrust out,
ver. 28. thrust out, which signifieth a violent act, resisting with striving; those that would (though unqualified) enter: the porters of the temple were, for this very thing, to wear arms if need were, and to be men of courage and strength, lest the unsanctified or unprepared should by some means enter in.

We reade in the book of the *Revelations*, of the *holy citie*, and that it had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve Angels, but what did they do there? why amongst the rest of their service, this was one thing, *that there might in no wise enter in, any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie: Revel. 21. 12. 21.*

But more particularly to shew what it is, that maketh this gate so strait: there are three things that make it strait.

1. There is sin.
2. There is the word of the law.
3. There are the Angels of God.

First,

First, there is sin, the sin of the profane, and the sin of the professor.

1. The sin of the profane, but this needs not be enlarged upon, because it is concluded upon, at all hands, where there is the common belief of the being of God, and the judgment to come, that the *wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God : Psal. 9 17.*

2. But there is the sin of professors, or take it rather thus, there is a profession that will stand with an unsanctified heart and life, the sin of such will overpoise the salvation of their souls, the sin-end being the heaviest end of the scale : I say, that being the heaviest end which hath sin in it ; they tilt over ; and so are, notwithstanding their glorious profession, drowned in perdition and destruction : *for none such hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, therefore let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things, comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience ;*

disobediencie; neither will a profession be able to excuse them, *Ephes. 5. 3. 4. 5. 6.* The gate will be too strait for such as these to enter in thereat. A man may partake of salvation in part, but not of salvation in whole: God saved the children of Israel out of Egypt, but overthrew them in the wilderness: *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that belived not: so we see, (that notwithstanding their beginning) they could not enter in, because of unbelief, Jude. 5. Heb. 3. 19.*

Secondly, There is the word of the Law, and that will make the gate strait also: none must go in thereat but those that can go in by the leave of the law, for though no man be or can be, justified by the works of the law, yet unlesse the righteousness and holyness by which they attempt to enter into this kingdom, be justified

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by the law, tis in vain once to think of entring in at this *strait gate* : now the law justifieth not, but upon the account of Christs righteousness ; if therefore thou be not indeed found in that righteousness, thou wilt finde the law, lie just in the passage into heaven to keep thee out ; every mans work must be tried by fire, that it may be manifest of what sort it is. There are two errors in the world about the law, one is, when men think to enter in at the *strait gate* by the righteousness of the law, the other is, when men think they may enter into heaven without the leave of the law ; both these, I say, are errors : for, as by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified, so without the consent of the law, no flesh shall be saved, heaven and earth shall passe away, before one jot, or tittle of the law shall fail, till all be fulfilled : he therefore must be damned, that cannot be saved by the consent of the law, and indeed this law is the flaming sword that turneth every

every way, yea, that lieth to this day, in the way, to heaven, for a barr to all unbelievers and unsanctified professors, for it is taken out of the way for the truly gracious only; it will be found as a roaring lion to devour all others: because of the law therefore the gate will be found too strait for the unsanctified to enter in; when the Apostle had told the Corinthians, that the unrighteous should not inherit the Kingdom of God, and, that such were some of them, he adds, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, & by the spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10. 11. closely concluding, that had they not been washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, the law, for their transgressions, would have kept them out, it would have made the gate too strait for them to enter in.

Thirdly, There are also the Angels of God, and by reason of them the gate is strait. The Lord Jesus, calleth the

end of the world, his harvest; and saith moreover, that the Angels are his reapers; these Angels are therefore to gather his wheat into his barn, but to gather the ungodly into bundles to burn them, *Mat. 13. 39. 41. 49.* unless therefore, the man that is unsanctified, can master the law, and conquer Angels: unless he can, as I may say, pull them out of the gateway of heaven, himself is not to come thither for ever: no man goeth to heaven but by the help of the Angels, I mean at the day of Judgment, For the son of man, shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, *Mat. 24. 31.* If those that shall enter in at the trait gate shall enter in thither by the conduct of the holy Angels: pray when do you think those men will enter in thither, concerning whom the Angels are commanded, to gather them, to binde them in bundles,

to burn them; This therefore is a third Difficulty: the Angels will make this enterance strait, yea, too strait for the unjustified and unsanctified to enter in thither.

I come now to the Exhortation, which is *to strive to enter in; strive to enter in at the strait gate.*

These words are fitly added, for since the gate is strait, it follows, *that they that will enter in must strive.*

Strive, this word *strive*, supposeth that great idleness is natural to professors, they think to get to heaven by lying as it were on their elbows.
2. It also suggesteth, that many will be the difficulties that professors will meet with before they get to heaven.
3. It also concludeth, that only the labouring Christian, man or woman will get in thither.

Strive, &c.

Three questions I will propound upon the word, an answer to which

may give us light into the meaning of it.

1. *Quest.* What doth this word, *strive*, import?

2. *Quest.* How should we *strive*?

3. *Quest.* Why should we *strive*?

First, What doth this word *strive*, import?

Answ. When he saith, *strive*, It is as much as to say, bend your selves to the work with all your might: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do; do it with all thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. Eccles. 9. 10. thus Sampson did, when he set himself to destroy the Philistins, he bowed himself with all his might, Judg. 16. 30. Thus David did also when he made provision for the building and beautifying of the temple of God, 1 Chro. 29. 2. And thus must thou do if ever thou entrest into heaven.

2ly, When he saith *strive*, he calleth for the minde and the will, that they should be on his side, and on the

side of the things of his kingdome ;
for none strive indeed, but such as have
 given the son of God their heart, of
 which the minde and will are a prin-
 cipal part, for saving conversion lieth
 more in the turning of the minde and
 will to Christ, and to the Love of his
 heavenly things, then in all know-
 ledge and Judgment : and this the
 Apostle confirmeth when he saith,
stand fast in one spirit, with one minde,
striving &c. Philip. 1. 27.

3ly, And more particularly, this
 word *strive*, is expressed by several
 other terms, as,

1. It is expressed by that word, *so*
run that you may obtain, 1 Cor. 9. 24.
 25.

2. It is expressed by that word,
fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of
eternal life, 1 Tim. 6. 12.

3. It is expressed by that word, *la-*
bour not for the meat that perisheth, but
for that meat that endureth to everlast-
ing life, Joh. 6. 27.

4. It is expressed by that word, *we*

wrestle with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, Ephes. 6. 12. Therefore when he saith, *strive*, it is as much as to say, *run* for heaven, *fight* for heaven, *labour* for heaven, *wrestle* for heaven, or you are like to go without it.

Secondly, the second question, is *how should we strive?*

Ans. 1. The answer in general is, thou must strive lawfully; and if a man also strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully, 2 Tim. 25.

But you will say, *what is it to strive lawfully?*

Answer 1. to strive against the things which are abhorred by the Lord Jesus, yea, to resist to the spilling of your blood, *striving against sin*, Heb. 12. 4. to have all those things that are condemned by the word, yea, though they be thine own right hand, right eye, or right foot, in abomination; and to seek by all godly means the utter suppressing of them, Mar. 9. 43, 45, 47.

2ly, To

2ly, To strive lawfully is to strive for those things that are commended in the word; *But thou O man of God fly the world, and follow after, that is strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, &c.* 1 Tim. 6. 11. 12.

3ly, He that striveth lawfully must be therefore very temperate in all the good and lawful things of this life. *And every one that strives for the mastery, is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible,* 1 Cor. 9. 25. most professors give leave to the world, and vanity of their hearts, to close with them and to hang about their necks, and make their striving to stand rather in an out-cry of words, then a hearty labour against the lusts, and love of the world, and their own corruptions, but this kind of striving is but a beating of the air, and will come to just nothing at last, 1 Cor. 9. 26.

4ly, He that striveth lawfully, must take God and Christ along with him to the work, otherwise he will certainly be undone: whereunto, said Paul, *I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily, Colo. 1. 29.* and for the right performing of this, he must observe these following particulars:

1. He must take heed, that he doth not strive about things, or words to no profit, for God will not ~~then~~ be with him: of these things, saith the Apostle, *put them in remembrance; charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but in the subverting of the hearers, 1 Tim. 2. 14.* But alas! how many professors in our days are guilty of this transgression, whose religion stands chiefly, if not only, in a few unprofitable questions, and vain ranglings, about words and things to no profit, but to the destruction of the hearers, *Tit. 3. 9.*

2. He must take heed, that whilst
he

he strives against one sin, he does not harbour and shelter another, or that whilst he cries out against other mens sins, he does not countenance his own.

3. In the striving, strive to believe, strive for the faith of the Gospel, for the more we believe the Gospel, and the realitie of the things of the world to come, with the more stomach and courage shall we labour to possess the blessedness; *Philip. 1. 27. Heb. 4. let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

4. As we should strive for, and by faith, so we should strive by prayer, *Rom. 15. 30.* by fervent and effectual praiers; O the swarms of our praierless professors! what do they think of themselves! surely the gate of heaven was heretofore as wide as in these our dayes, but what striving by praier was there then among Christians for the thing that gives admittance into this kingdom, over there is in these latter days?

5. We

5. We should also strive by mortifying our members that are upon the earth: *I therefore so run, said Paul, so fight I, not as one that beats the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached the Gospel to others I my self should be a castaway.* 1 Cor. 9. 27. But all this is spoken principally to professors, so I would be understood.

I come now to the third question, namely *but why should we strive?*

Answer 1. Because the thing for which you are here exhorted to strive, it is worth the striving for: it is for no less then for a whole heaven, and an eternity of felicity there; how will men that have before them, a little honour, a little profit, a little pleasure, strive? I say again, how will they strive for *this*? now they do it for a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. Methinks this word heaven, and this eternal life, what is there again either in heaven or earth like them to provoke

provoke a man to strive?

2. *Strive*, because otherwise the devil, and hell, will assuredly have thee. *He goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking who he may devour: 1 Pet. 5. 8.* these fallen Angels, they are always watchful, diligent, unwearied, they are also mighty, subtle, and malicious, seeking nothing more then the damnation of thy soul; O thou that art like the heartless dove, *strive*.

3. *Strive* because every lust strives and wars against thy soul; *the flesh lusteth against the spirit; dearly beloved, I beseech you, said Peter, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: Gal. 5. 17.* 'tis a rare thing to see, or finde out a Christian, that indeed can bridle his lusts, but no strange thing to see such professors that are not only bridled, but saddled too, yea, and ridden from lust to sin, from one vanitie to another, by the very devil himself, and the corruptions of their hearts.

4. *Strive*, because thou hast a whole

whole world against thee, the world hateth thee, if thou bee t a christian : the men of the world hate thee, the things of the world are snares for thee, even thy bed and table, thy wife and husband, yea, thy most lawful enjoyments have that in them that will certainly sink thy soul to hell, if thou doeit not *strive* against the snares that are in them, *Rom.*

11.9.

The world will seek to keep thee out of heaven, with mocks, flouts, tannts, threatnings, goals, gibbets, halters, burnings, and a thousand deaths, *therefore strive* Again, if it cannot overcome thee with these, it will flatter, promise, allure, intice, intreat, and use a thousand tricks on this hand to destroy thee ; and observe, many that have been stout against the threats of the world, have yet been overcome with the bewitching flatteries of the same : there ever was enmity betwixt the devil and the Church, and betwixt his seed and her seed too ; *Michael*.

Michael and his Angels, and the dragon and his angels: these make war continually. *Gen. 3. Revel. 12.* There hath been great desires and endeavors among men to reconcile these two in one, to wit, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman, but it could never be yet accomplished: the world says, they will never come over to us, and we again say, by Gods grace, we will never come over to them, but the business has not ended in words, both they and we have also added our endeavours to make each other submit, but endeavours have proved ineffectual too: They for their part have devised all manner of cruel torments to make us submit, as slaying with the sword, stoning, sawing asunder, flames, wilde beasts, banishments, hunger, and a thousand miseries; we again on the other side have laboured by prayers, and tears, by patience, and long-suffering, by gentleness, and love, by sound doctrine,

ctrine, and faithful witness-bearing against their enormities, to bring them over to us, but yet the enmitie remains; so that they must conquer us, or we must conquer them, one side must be overcome, *but the weapons of our war fare are not carnal but mighty through God.*

5. *Strive*, because there is nothing of Christianity got by idleness, idleness cloaths a man with rags, and the vineyard of the slothful is grown over with nettles, *Pro. 23. 21. chap. 24. 30. 31. 32.* profession that is not attended with spiritual labour cannot bring the soul to heaven, the fathers before us were not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. *Therefore be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; Rom. 12. 11. Heb. 6. 12.*

Strive to enter in.

Methinks the words at the first reading, do intimate to us, that the Christian in all that ever he does in this

this world, should carefully heed and regard his soul, I say, in all that ever he does; many are for their souls by fits and starts, but a Christian indeed in all his doings, and designs which he contriveth and manageth in this world, should have a special eye to his own future and everlasting good, in all his labours he should strive to enter in. *Wisdom (Christ)* is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom, and in all thy gettings get understanding, Pro. 4. 7. Get nothing, if thou canst not get Christ and grace, and further hopes of heaven, in that getting; get nothing with a bad conscience, with the hazzard of thy peace with God, and that in getting it, thou weakenest thy graces which God hath given thee, for this is *not to strive to enter in*: adde grace to grace, both by religious and worldly duties, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1. 1. 8. 9. 10.

11. religious duties are not only the striving times; he that thinks so, *out*: thou maist help thy faith, and thy hope in the godly managment of thy calling, and maist get further footing in eternal life, by studying the glory of God, in all thy worldly imployment. I am speaking now to Christians that are justified freely by grace, and am encouraging, or rather counselling of them, to *strive to enter in*, for there is an entring in by faith and good conscience *now*, as well as an entring in, in body and soul *hereafter*; and I must, add, that the more common it is to thy soul, to enter in now by faith, the more steadfast hope shalt thou have of entring in hereafter in body and soul.

Strive to enter in.

By these words also the Lord Jesus giveth sharp rebuke to those professors that have not eternal glory, but other temporal things in their eye, by all the bustle that they make in the world about religion: some there be,
what

what a stir they make, what a noise and clamour, with their notions and forms, and yet perhaps all is but for the loaves; because they have eaten of the loaves and are filled *Joh. 6. 26.* these strive indeed to enter, but it is not into heaven; they finde, religion hath a good trade at the end of it, or they finde, that it is the way to credit, ropure, preferment, and the like, and therefore they strive to enter into these; but these have not the strait gate in their eye, nor yet in themselves have they love to their poor, and perishing souls: wherefore this exhortation nippeth such, by predicting of their damnation.

Strive to enter in.

These words also sharply rebuke them who content themselves as the Angel of the *Church of Sardis* did, to wit, *to have a name to live, and be dead,* Revel. 3. 1. or as they of the *Laodiceans*, who took their religion upon trust, and was content, *with a poor, wretched, lukewarm profession:* For
such

such as these do altogether unlike to the Exhortation in the text; that says, *strive*; and they sit and sleep, that says *strive to enter in*, and they content themselves with a profession that is never like to bring them thither.

Strive to enter in.

Further, these words put us upon proving the truth of our graces, *now*: I say, they put us upon the proof of the truth of them *now*: for if the *strait gate* be the gate of heaven, and yet we are to strive to enter into it *now*, even while we live, and before we come thither; then, doubtless Christ means by this exhortation, that we should use all lawful means to prove our graces in this world whether they will stand in the judgment or no: *strive to enter in*, get those graces now that will prove true graces then, and therefore try them you have, and if upon tryall they prove not right, cast them away, and cry for better, lest they cast thee away, when better are not to be had: *Buy of me gold tried in the*

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the fire, mark that, *Revel. 13. 20.*
Buy of me faith and grace that will
stand in the judgment, strive for that
faith, buy of me that grace, and also
white raiment that thou mayest be
cloathed, that the shame of thy wicked-
ness doth not appear, and annoint thine
eyes with eye-salve that thou maiest see :
munde you this advice, this is right
striving to enter in.

But you will say, how should we
try our graces? would you have us
run into temptation to try if they be
sound or rotten?

Answ. You need not run into try-
als, God hath ordained that enow of
them shall overtake thee to prove thy
graces either rotten or sound before
the day of thy death : *sufficient to the
day is the evil thereof*, if thou hast but
a sufficiency of grace to withstand. I
say, thou shalt have tryals, enow,
overtake thee, to prove thy graces
sound or rotten : thou maiest there-
fore, if God shall help thee, see how
it is like to go with thee before thou
goest

goest out of this world, to wit, whether thy graces be such as will carry thee in at the gates of heaven or no.

But how should we try our graces now?

Ans. How doest thou finde them in outward trials? see *Heb. 11. 15. 16.* how doest thou finde thy self in the inward workings of sin? (*Ro. 7. 24.*) how doest thou find thy self under the most high enjoyment of grace in this world? *Phil. 3. 14.*

But what do you mean by these three questions?

Ans. I mean graces shew themselves at these three seasons whether they be rotten or sound.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the first of these?

Ans. By mistrusting our own sufficiency, by crying to God for help, by desiring rather to die than to bring any dishonour to the name of God, and by counting, that if God be honoured in the trial, thou hast gained more then all the world could give thee,

thee, 2 Chro. 20. 12. chap. 14. 11.
 Acts, 4. Acts. 20. 24. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.
 Heb. 11. 24, 25.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the second?

Ans. By mourning and confessing, and striving, and praying against them; by not being content, shouldst thou have heaven if they live, and defile thee, and by counting of holyness the greatest beauty in the world, and by flying to Jesus Christ for life. Zech. 12. 10. Joh. 19. Heb. 12. 4. Psal. 19. 12.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the third?

By prizing the true graces above all the world, by praying heartily that God will give thee more, by not being content with all the grace thou canst be capable of enjoying on this side heaven and glory, Psal. 84. 10. Luk. 17. 5. Philip. 3. chapters.

Strive to enter in.

The reason why Christ addeth these words, *to enter in*, is obvious; to wit,

wit, because there is no true & lasting happiness on this side heaven ; I say none that is both true and lasting, I mean, as to our sense and feeling, as there there shall, *for here have we no continuing city but we seek one to come ; Heb. 13. 14.* the heaven is within, *strive therefore to enter in ; the glory is within, strive therefore to enter in ; the Mount Sion is within, strive therefore to enter in ; the heavenly Jerusalem is within, strive therefore to enter in ; Angels, and Saints are within, strive therefore to enter in ; and to make up all, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that glorious redeemer is within, strive therefore to enter in.*

☉ *Strive to enter in.*

☉ *For without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and adulterers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie : without are also the devils, and hell, and death, and all damned souls ; without is howling, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth ;*

teeth; yea without are all the miseries, sorrows, and plagues that an infinite God can in justice and power inflict upon an evil and wicked generation: *strive therefore to enter in at the strait gate.* Revel. 22. 15. Matt. 25. 41. Revel. 12. 9. Isai. 65. 13. 14. Matt. 22. 13. Dent. 29. 18. 19. 20.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate, [for many] I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

We are now come to the motive which our Lord urges to inforce his exhortation: he told us *before*, that the gate was strait, he also *exhorted* us to *strive* to enter in thereat, or to get those things *now* that will further our entrance *then*, and to set our selves against those things that will hinder our entering in.

In this motive there are five things to be minded.

1. That there will be a disappointment to some at the day of judgment, *they will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

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2. That

2. That not a few, but many, will meet with this disappointment, for [many] will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

3. This doctrine of the miscarriage of many, then, it standeth upon the validity of the word of Christ; for many [I say] will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

4. Professors shall make a great heap, among the many that shall fall short of heaven, for many I say [unto you] will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

5. Where grace and striving are wanting now, seeking, and contending to enter in, will be unprofitable then, for many, I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

But I will proceed in my former method, to wit, to open the words unto you.

For many, &c,

If he had said, for [some] will fall short, it had been a sentence to be minded: If he had said, for some that seek,

seek, will fall short, it had been very awakening, but when he saith, *many, many will fall short*, yea many among professors will fall short, this is not only awakning, but dreadful.

For many, &c.

I finde this word *many*, variously applyed in the Scripture.

1. Sometimes it intendeth the open profane, the wicked, and ungodly world, as where Christ saith, *wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat*; *Matt. 7. 13.* I say by the *many here*, he intends those chiefly, that go on in the broad way of sin, and prophaness, bearing the tokens of their damnation in their foreheads, those whose dayly practise proclaims, that their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold of hell. *Job, 21. 29. 30. Isa. 3. 9. Pro. 55.*

2. Sometimes this word, *many*, intendeth those that cleave to the people of God deceitfully, and in hypocrisy; or as *Daniel* hath it, *many shall*

cleave unto the Church with flatteries.
Dan. 11. 34. The word *many*, in this text, includeth all those who feign themselves better then they are in religion; it includeth I say those that have religion, *only*, for an holy-day saint to set them out at certain times and when they come among futable company.

3. Sometimes this word *many*, intendeth them that apostatise from Christ, such as for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away, as *John* saith of some of Christs disciples, *from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Job. 6. 66.*

4. Sometimes this word *many*, intendeth them that make a great noyse, and do many great things in the Church, and yet want saving grace, *many*, saith Christ, will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works: mark, there

there will be *many* of these.

5. Sometimes this word *many* intendeth those poor ignorant deluded souls that are ledd away with every winde of doctrine: those who are caught with the cunning and crafty deceiver, who lieth in wait to beguile unstable souls. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, 2 Pet. 2. 2.*

6. Sometimes this word *many* includeth all the world, good and bad. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt: Dan. 12. 2.* compared with *Joh. 5. 28. 29.*

7. Lastly, Sometimes this word *many* intendeth the *good* only, even them that shall be saved, *Luk. 1. 10. ch. p. 2. 34.*

Since then that the word is so variously applied, let us enquire how it must be taken in the text, and.

1. It must not be applied to the *sincerely godly*, for they shall never perish, *Joh. 10. 27. 28.*

2. It cannot be applied to *all the world*, for then no flesh should be saved.

3. Neither is it to be applied to the open profane only, for then the hypocrite is by it excluded.

4. But by the *many* in the text our Lord intendeth in special the professor, the professor I say, how high soever he seems to be now, that shall be found without saving grace in the day of Judgment.

Now that the professor, *is in special intended in this text*, consider; so soon as the Lord had said, *many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, he pointeth, as with his finger, at the *many* that then he in special intendeth, to wit, them among whom he had taught; them that had eat and drunken in his presence; them that had prophesied, and cast out devils in his name, and in his name done many wonderful works.

works. *Luk. 13. 26. Matt. 7. 22.*
These are the *many* intended by the Lord in this text, though others are also included under the sentence of damnation by his word in other places.

For many, &c.

Matthew saith concerning this strait gate, *That there are but few that finde it* : but it seems the *east-aways* in my text, did finde it, for you reade that they knocked at it, and cried, *Lord open unto us* : so then, the meaning may seem to be this, *many of the few that finde it, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

I finde at the day of Judgment, some will be crying to the rocks to cover them, and some at the gates of heaven for entrance : suppose that those that cry to the rocks to cover them, are they whose conscience will not suffer them, once to look God in the face because they are fallen under present guilt, and the dreadful fears of the wrath of the lamb.

Revel. 6. 16. And that those that stand crying at the gate of heaven, are those whose confidence holds out to the last, even those whose boldness will enable them to contend even with Jesus Christ for entrance. Them, I say, that will have, profession, casting out of devils, and many wonderful works to pleade: of this sort are the many in my text; *for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

For many, &c.

Could we compare the professors of the times with the everlasting word of God, this doctrine would more easily appear to the children of men. How few among the many, yea among the many swarms of professors have heart to make conscience of walking before God, in this world, and to study his glory among the children of men: How few, I say, have his name lie nearer their hearts, then their own carnal concerns, nay, do not many make his word,
and

and his name, and his ways a stalking-horse, to their own worldly advantages. God calls for faith, good conscience, moderation, self-denial, humility, heavenly-mindedness, love to Saints, to enemies : and for conformity in heart, in word, and life to his will, but where is it ? *Mar. 11. 22. Pet. 3. 16. Heb. 13. 5. Philip. 4. 5. Matt. 10. 37, 38, 39. Colo. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. Mich. 6. 8. Revel. 2. 10. Joh. 15. 17. 1 Joh. 4. 21. Matt. 5. 4. Pro. 23. 26. Colo. 4. 6.*

For many [I say unto you].

These latter words carry in them a double argument to prove the truth asserted before. First, in that he directly pointeth at his followers. *I say unto [you]* : many I say unto *you*, even to *you* that are my disciples, to *you* that have eat and drunk in my presence. I know that sometimes Christ hath directed his speech to his disciples, not so much upon there accounts, as upon the accounts of others : but here it is not so : the *I*

say unto you, in this place, it immediately concerned some of themselves. I say unto you, ye shall begin to stand without, and to knock saying, Lord, Lord open to us, and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, we have eat, and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, 'tis you, you, you, that I mean.

I say unto you.

It is common with a professing people, when they hear a smart and thundering Sermon, to say, now has the preacher paid off the drunkard, the sweater, the liar, the covetous, and adulterer; forgetting that these sins may be committed in a spiritual and mystical way. There is spiritual drunkenness, spiritual adultery, and a man may be a liar that calls God his father when he is not, or that calls himself a christian and is not. Wherefore perhaps

perhaps all these thunders and lightnings in this terrible Sermon, may more concern thee then thou art aware of, *I say unto you* : unto you professors may be the application of all this thunder, *Rev. 2. 9. chap. 3. 9.*

I say unto you.

Had not the Lord Jesus designed by these words, to shew what an overthrow will one day be made among professors, he needed not to have *you'ed* it at this rate, as in the text, and afterwards he has done, the sentence had run intelligible enough without it; *I say*, without his saying [*I say unto you*]; but the truth is, the professor is in danger, the preacher, and hearer, the workers of miracles, and workers of wonders may all be in danger of damning, notwithstanding all their attainments. And to awaken us all about this truth therefore, the text must run *thus*, for many, *I say unto you*, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

See you not yet, that the professor

For is in danger, and that these words, *I say unto you*, are a Propheſie of the everlaſting perdition of ſome that are famous in the congregation of Saints : I ſay, if you do not ſee it, pray God your eyes may be opened, and beware that thy portion be not as the portion of one of thoſe that are wrapped up in the twenty eight verſe of the chapter. *There ſhall be weeping and gnawing of teeth, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham and Iſaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and you your ſelves thruſt out.*

For many [I ſay] unto you.

Theſe words, I told you, carry in them a double argument for confirmation of the truth aſſerted before : firſt, the profeſſors are here particularly pointed at ; and ſecondly it is the ſaying of the truth himſelf ; for theſe words *I ſay*, are words full of authority. I ſay it, I ſay unto you, ſaith Chriſt, as he ſaith in another place, *It is I that ſpeak, behold it is I.* The perſon whoſe words we have
now

now under consideration, was no blundering raw-headed preacher, but the very wisdom of God, his son, and him that hath lain in his bosom, from everlasting, and consequently, had the most perfect knowledge of his fathers will, and how it would fare with professors at the end of this world. And now hearken what himself doth say of the words which he hath spoken; *heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away, Matt. 24. 35.*

[I say] unto you.

The Prophets used not to speak after this manner, nor yet the holy Apostles; for thus to speak is to press things to be received upon their own authority. They used to say, *thus saith the Lord, or Paul, or Peter an Apostle, or a servant of God.* But now we are dealing with the words of the son of God, it is *he* that hath said it, wherefore we finde the truth of the perishing of many professors, asserted, and confirmed by Christs own mouth.

This

This consideration carrieth great awaking in it, but into such a fast sleep are many now adays fallen, that nothing will awaken them but that shrill and terrible cry, *behold the bridegroom comes, go ye out to meet him.*

I say unto you.

There are two things upon which this assertion may be grounded.

1. *There is in the world a thing like grace that is not.*

2. *There is a sin called, the sin against the holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption, and both these things befall professors.*

First, *There is in the world a thing like grace that is not.*

1. This is evident, because we read that there are some that not only make a fair shew in the flesh, that glory in appearance, that appear beautiful outwardly, that do as Gods people, but have not the grace of Gods people, Gal. 6. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 12. Matt. 23. 27. Isa. 57. 12.

2. 'Tis evident also from those frequent

frequent cautions that are every where in the Scriptures given us about this thing: *Be not deceived; let a man examine himself; examine yourselves whether you be in the faith*: all these expressions intimate to us, that there may be a shew of, or a thing like grace where there is no grace indeed, *Galat. 6. 7. 1 Cor. 11. 28. 2 Cor. 13. 5.*

3. This is evident from the conclusion made by the holy Ghost upon this very thing, *for if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. Gal. 6. 3.* The holy Ghost here concludeth, that a man may think himself to be something, may think he hath grace, when he hath none, may think himself something for heaven and another world, when indeed he is just nothing at all with reference thereto: the holy Ghost also determines upon this point, to wit, that they do so deceive themselves; *for if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing,*
he

he deceiveth himself, he deceiveth his own soul, he deceiveth himself of heaven and salvation: so again, let no man beguile you of your reward, Col. 2.18.

4. It is also manifest from the text, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able: alas! great light, great parts, great works, and great confidence of heaven may be where there is no faith of Gods elect, no love of the spirit, no repentance unto salvation, no sanctification of the spirit, and so consequently no saving grace, but

Secondly, as there is a thing like grace which is not, so there is a sin called the sin against the holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption, and this sin doth more ordinarily befall professors.

1. There is a sin called the sin against the holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption; this is evident both from *Matthew* and *Mark*: But whosoever speaketh against the ho-

ly

ly Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come. But he that shall blaspheme against the holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation, *Matt. 12. 32. Mar. 3. 29.* wherefore when we know that a man hath sinned this sin, we are not to pray for him, or to have compassion on him *1 Job. 15. 16. Judg. 22.*

2. This sin doth most ordinarily beset professors, for there are few, if any, that are not professors, that are at present capable of sinning this sin. *They which were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, that were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, Heb. 6. 4. 5.* of this sort are they that commit this sin; Peter also describes them to be such, that sin the unpardonable sin. For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled there-

in and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning, 2 Pet. 2. 2. That other passage in the tenth of the hebrews holdeth forth the same thing; for if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain, fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries. Heb. 10. 26. 27.

These therefore are the persons that are the prey for this sin: this sin feedeth upon professors, and they that are such do very often fall into the mouth of this eater. Some fall into the mouth of this sin, by delusions, and doctrines of devils and, some fall into the mouth of it, by returning with the dog to his own vomit again, and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. 1 Pet. 2. 22. I shall not here give you a particular description of this sin, that I have done elsewhere; but such a sin there is, and they that commit it shall never have

worſhip have forgiveness ; and I ſay again,
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 them that they may ſo do : for what
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Will ſeek to enter in.

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 into in my text will ſeek to enter in. For
 ns, then they will ſee that the bleſſed-
 all neſſe is to thoſe that ſhall get into
 ng this kingdom, according to that
 in, which is written, *Bleſſed are they that*
 to *do his Commandments, that they may*
 I *have right to the tree of life, and may*
 ar *enter in through the gates into the city,*
 e *Revel. 22. 14.*

To prove that they will ſeek, al-
 though I have done it already, yet
 reade

reade these texts at your leisure
Matt. 25. 11. chap. 7. 22. Luk. 13. 28

And in a word to give you the
 reason why they will *seek to enter*
in.

1. Now they will see what a king-
 dom it is, what glory there is in it,
 and now they shall also see the bles-
 sednesse which they shall have that
 shall then be counted worthy to enter
 in; the reason why this kingdom is
 so little regarded, it is because it is
 not seen, the glory of it is hid from
 the eyes of the world: *their eye hath*
not seen, nor their ear heard, &c. I,
 but then they shall hear and see too,
 and when this comes to passe, then
 even then he that now most seldom
 thinks thereof, will *seek to enter in.*

2. They will now see what hell is,
 and what damnation in hell is, more
 clear then ever; They will also see
 how the breath of the Lord like a
 stream of brimstone doth kindle it:
 O the sight of the burning fiery fur-
 nace which is prepared for the devil
 and

and his Angels! this, this will make work in the souls of castaways at that day of God almighty, and then they will *seek to enter in.*

3. Now they will see what the meaning of such words as these are, hell-fire, everlasting fire, devouring fire, fire that never shall be quenched: now they will see what for ever, means: what eternity means: now they will see what this word means, *the bottomless pit*: now they will hear roaring of sinners in this place, howling in that, some crying to the mountains to fall upon them, and others to the rocks to cover them; now they will see blessedness is no where but within.

4. Now they will see what glory the godly are possessed with, how they rest in *Abrahams* bosom, how they enjoy eternal glory, how they walk in their white robes, and are equal to the Angels. O the favour, and blessedness, and unspeakable happyness that now Gods people shall

shall have, and this shall be seen by them that are shut out, by them that God hath rejected for ever, and this will make them seek to enter in. *Luk. 16. 22. 23. 13. 28.*

Will seek to enter in.

Q. But some may say, *how will they seek to enter in?*

Ans. They will put on all the confidence they can, they will trick, and trim up their profession, and adorn it with what bravery they can. *Thus the foolish virgins sought to enter in, they did trim up their lamps, made themselves as fine as they could, they made shift to make their lamps to shine a while, but the son of God, discovering himself, their confidence failed, their lamps went out, the door was shut upon them, and they were kept out. Matt. 25. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.*

2. They will seek to enter in, by crouding themselves in among the godly. *Thus the man withone the wedding garment, sought to enter in, he*
goes

by goes to the wedding, gets into the
hat wedding-chamber, sits close among
his the guests, and then, without doubt,
in. concluded, he should escape damna-
tion: but you know, one black sheep is
soon seen, though it be among an hun-
dred white ones, why even thus it fair-
ed with this poor man; And when
he the king came in to see the guests, he
k. saw there a man that had not on a wed-
a. ding-garment. He spied him present-
n. ly, and before one word was spoken
er. to any of the other, he had this dread-
de. ful salutation, friend how camest thou
y. in hither, not having on a wedding-
o. garment? And he was speechless,
? though he could swagger it out a-
? mongst the guests, yet the Master
of the Feast, at first coming in,
strikes him dumb, and having no-
thing to say for himself, the King
had something to say against him:
Then said the king to the servants
(the Angels) bind him hand and foot,
and take him away, and cast him into
outer darkness, there shall be weeping
and

and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22. 11, 12, 13.)

3. They will seek to enter in by pleading their profession and admittance to the Lords Ordinances, when they were in the world, *Lord we have eat and drunk in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets*, we sat at thy table and used to frequent sermons and Christian assemblies ; we were well thought of by thy saints, and were admitted into thy Churches, we professed the same faith as they did, *Lord, Lord, open unto us.*

4. They will seek to enter in, by pleading their virtues, how they subjected to his ministry, how they wrought for him, what good they did in the world, and the like, *Matt. 7. 22.* but neither will this help them; the same answer that the two former had, the same have these ; *depart from me ye workers of iniquity.*

5. They will seek to enter in by pleading excuses, where they cannot evade conviction. The slothful servant went

went this way to work, when he was called to account for not improving his Lords mony. *Lord, says he, I knew thou wast an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strewed, and I was a afraid, &c.* (either that I should not please in laying out thy mony, or that I should put it into hands, out of which I should not get it again at thy need) *and I went and hid thy talent in the earth, lo, there thou hast that is thine;* as if he had said, true Lord, I have not improved, I have not got, but consider also, I have not imbezled I have not spent, nor lost thy mony, *lo there thou hast that is thine, Matt. 25. 24, 25, 26, 27.* There are but few will be able to say these *last words* at the day of judgment; the most of professors are for imbezzeling, mispending and slothing away their time, their talents, their opportunities to do good in; but, I say, if he that can make so good an excuse as to say, *lo, there thou hast what is thine :* I say if

D

such

such an one shall be called *a wicked and slothful servant*, if such an one shall be put to shame at the day of judgment, yea if such an one, shall, notwithstanding this care to save his Lords mony, be cast as *unprofitable into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, what will they do that have neither took care to lay out, nor care to keep what was committed to their trust?

6. They will seek to enter in by pleading, that ignorance was the ground of their miscarrying in the things wherein they offended; wherefore when Christ charges them with want of love to him, and with want of those fruits that should prove their love to be true, as, *that they did not feed him, did not give him drink, did not take him in, did not clothe him, visit him, come unto him, and the like*: they readily reply, *Lord, when saw we the an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister*

minister unto thee : *Matt. 25. 41. 42. 43. 44.* As who should say, Lord, we are not conscious to our selves, that this charge is worthyly laid at our door. God forbid that we should have been such sinners, but Lord, give an instance ; when was it, or where ? true, there was a company of poor sorry people in the world very inconsiderable, set by with nobody, but for thy self we professed thee, we loved thee, and hadst thou been with us in the world, wouldest thou have worn gold, wouldest thou have eaten the sweetest of the world, we would have provided it for thee ; and therefore, *Lord, Lord open to us.* But will this plea do ? no, then shall he answer them, *inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me.* This plea then though grounded upon ignorance, which is one of the strangest pleas for neglect of duty, would not give them admittance into the kingdom. *These shall go away into everlasting*

ing punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

I might add other things by which it will appear how they will seek to enter in; as,

1. They will make a stop at this gate, this beautiful gate of heaven, they will *begin to stand without at the gate*, as being loath to go any further: never did malefactor so unwillingly turn off the ladder, when the rope was about his neck, as these will turn away, in that day, from the gates of heaven to hell.

2. They will not only make a stop at the gate; but there *they will knock and call*, this also argueth them willing to enter: they will *begin to stand without and to knock at the gate saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* This word, *Lord*, being doubled, shews the vehemency of their desires: *Lord, Lord, open unto us.* The devils are coming; *Lord, Lord*, the pit opens her mouth upon us: *Lord, Lord there is nothing but but hell and damnation*

nation left us, if Lord, Lord thou hast not mercy upon us; *Lord, Lord open to us.*

3. Their last argument for entrance is their tears, when groundless confidence, pleading of vertues, excuses and ignorance, will not do; when standing at the gate, knowing and calling *Lord Lord, open to us:* will not do, then they betake themselves to their tears: tears are sometimes the most powerful arguments, but they are nothing worth here: *Esau also sought it carefully, with tears,* but it helped him nothing at all, *Heb. 12. 15. 16. There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth,* for the gate is shut for ever, mercy is gone for ever, Christ hath rejected them for ever: all their pleas, excuses, and tears, will not make them able to enter into this kingdom.

For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

I come now to the latter part of the words which closely shews us the

reason of the rejection of these many that must be damned, *they will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

An hypocrite, a false professor may go a great way, they may pass thorough the first and second watch, to wit, may be approved of Christians and Churches, *but what will they do when they come at this iron gate that leadeth into the city?* there the workers of iniquity will fall, be cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

And shall not be able.

The time, as I have already hinted, which my Text respecteth, it is the day of judgement, a day when all masks and vizzards shall be taken off from all faces: It is a day wherein God will bring to light the hidden things of darknesse, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, 1 Cor. 4. 5. It is also the day of his wrath, the day in which he will pay vengeance, even a recompence to his adversaries.

At

At this day those things that now these *many* count sound and good, will then shake like a quagmire, even all their naked knowledge, their feigned faith, pretended love, glorious shews of gravity in the face, their holy-day words and specious carriages will stand them in little stead: I call them holy day ones, for I perceive that some professors do with religion, just as people do with their best apparel, hang it against the wall all the week, and put them on on Sundays: for as some scarce ever put on a Sute, but when they go to a Fair or a Market, so little house-religion will do with some; they save religion till they go to a Meeting, or till they meet with a godly chapman: O poor religion! O poor professor, what wilt thou do at this day, at the day of thy trial & judgement? cover thy self thou canst not, go for a Christian thou canst not, stand against the Judge thou canst not; what wilt thou do? *The un-*

godly shall not stand in judgement,
nor sinners in the congregation of the
righteous.

And shall not be able.

The ability here intended, is not
that which standeth in carnal power
or fleshly subtilty, but in the truth
and simplicity of those things, for
the sake of which, God giveth the
kingdom of heaven to his people.

There are five things, *for the want
of which*, this people will not be able
to enter.

First, this kingdom belongs to the
elect, to those for whom it was pre-
pared from the foundation of the
world, *Matt. 25.* hence Christ saith,
when he comes, *he will send forth his
angels with a great sound of a trumpet,
and they shall gather together his elect
from the four winds, from one end of
heaven to another, Matt. 24.* and hence
he saith again, *I will bring forth a seed
out of Jacob, and out of Judah, an
inheritor of my mountains, and mine
elect shall inherit it, and my servants
shall*

shall dwell there; they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, but the elect hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded, Rom. 11. 7.

Secondly, They will not be able to enter, because they will want the birth-right; the kingdom of heaven is for the heirs, and if children then heirs, if born again then heirs; wherefore it is said expressly, *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*; by this one word, down goes all carnal priviledge of being born of flesh, and blood, and of the will of man; canst thou produce the birth-right, but art thou sure thou canst? for it will little profit thee to think of the blessed kingdom of heaven, if thou wantest a birth-right to give thee inheritance there: *Esau*, did despise his birth-right; saying, *what good will this birth-right do me?* and there are many in the world of his mind to this day: tush (say they,) they talk of being born again, what good shall a man get by that? they say, no going

to heaven without being born again, but God is merciful, Christ died for sinners, and we will turn when we can tend it, and doubt not but all will be well at last. But I will answer thee, thou childe of *Eſau*, that the birth-right and blessing go together, miss of one, and thou shalt never have the other; *Eſau* found this true, for having first despised the birth-right, when he would afterwards have inherited the blessing he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears; *Gen. 25. Heb. 12. 14, 15. 16.*

Thirdly, they shall not be able to enter in who have not believed with the faith of Gods operation, the faith that is most holy, even the faith of Gods elect: *He that believeth on the son of God hath everlasting life, he that believeth not the son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Joh. 3.* But now, this faith is the effect of electing love, and of a new birth

birth, *Joh. 1. 11, 12.* therefore all the professors that have not that faith which floweth from being born of God, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

Fourthly, they shall not be able to enter in, that have not Gospel-holyness; holyness that is the effect of faith is that which admits into the presence of God, and into his kingdom too. *Blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection, and such the second death (which is hell and eternal damnation Revel. 20. 14.) hath no power, Revel. 20. 6.* Blessed and holy, with the holiness that flows from faith which is in Christ, for to these the inheritance belongs. *That they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith (said Christ) which is in me. Act's. 26. 18.* this holyness which is the natural effect of faith in the son of God, Christ Jesus the Lord, will at this day of judgment, distinguish from all other shews of holiness, and sanctific

sanctitie be they what they will, and will admit the soul that hath this holiness into his kingdom, when the rest will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Fifthly, *They shall not be able to enter in*, that do not persevere in this blessed faith and holiness, not that they that have them indeed, can finally fall away, and everlastingly perish, but it hath pleased Jesus Christ to bid them that have the right, to hold fast that they have, to endure to the end, and then tells them they shall be saved: though 'tis as true, that none is of power to keep himself, but God worketh together with his children, and *they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, which is also laid up in heaven for them.* 1 Pet. (I. 3, 4, 5.

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hastest the workers of iniquity. The foolish are the unholy ones, that neither have faith nor holiness, nor perseverance in godliness, and yet lay claim

claim to the kingdom of heaven : but better is a little with righteousness, then great revenues without right : *Psal. 55. Pro. 16. 8.* what is it for me to claim a house, or a farm without right ; or to say, all this is mine, but have nothing to shew for it : this is but like the revenues of the foolish : his estate lieth in his conceit ; *he hath nothing by birth-right, and law,* and therefore shall not be able to inherit the possession : *for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Thus you see, that the *non elect*, shall not be able to enter, that he that is not born again, shall not be able to enter, that he that hath not saving faith, with holiness and perseverance flowing therefrom, shall not be able to enter : wherefore consider of what I have said.

I come now to give you some Observations from the words, and they may be three.

First, *When men have put in all the claim*

claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance; for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Secondly, Great therefore will be the disappointment that many will meet with at the day of judgement; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Thirdly, Going to heaven therefore will be no trivial businesse, salvation is not got by a dream, they that would then have that kingdom must now strive lawfully to enter: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

I shall speak chiefly, and yet but briefly to the first of these Observations, to wit,

That when men have put in all the claim they can to the kingdom of heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance: The Observation standeth of two parts.

First, that the time is coming when every man will put in whatever claim they

they can to the kingdome of Heaven.

Secondly, there will be but few of them that put in claim thereto that shall enjoy it for their inheritance.

I shall speak but a word or two to the first part of the Observation, because I have prevented my enlargement thereon by my explication upon the words; but you finde in the 25. of *Matthew*, that all they on the left hand of the Judge, did put in all the claim they could for this blessed kingdome of heaven: If you shall take them on the left hand, as most do, for all the sinners that shall be damned, then that compleatly proveth the first part of the Observation, for it is expressly said, *then shall they,* (all of them jointly, and every one apart) also answer him saying, *Lord, when saw we thee thus and thus, and did not minister unto thee, Matt. 25. 44.* I could here bring you in the plea of the slothful servant, the cry of the foolish virgins; I could also here
inlarge

inlarge upon that passage *Lord, Lord, have we not eat and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;* but these things are handled already, in the handling of which, this first part of the Observation is proved; wherefore without more words, I will God assisting by his grace, descend to the second part thereof, to wit. *There will be but few of them that put in claim thereto, that will enjoy it for their inheritance.*

I shall speak distinctly to this part of the Observation, and shall first confirm it by a Scripture of two.

Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; Matt. 7. 13. 14.

Fear not little flock, it is your fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luk. 12. 32. By these two Texts, and by many more that will be urged anon you may see the truth of what I have said. To enlarge therefore upon the truth; and.

First, more generally.

Secondly,

Secondly, more particularly.

First, more generally I shall prove that in all ages, but few have been saved.

Secondly, more particularly, I shall prove but few of them that professe have been saved.

First, in the old world, when it was most populous, even in the days of *Noah*, we read but of eight persons that were saved out of it; well therefore might *Peter* call them but few, but how few? why but eight souls; wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water, 1 Pet. 3. 20. He touches a second time upon this truth, saying, he spared not the old world, but saved *Noah* the eight person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly: mark all the rest are called the ungodly, and there were also a world of them. 2 Pet. 2. 5. These are also taken notice of in *Job*, and go there also, by the name of wicked men, *Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden,*

den, which were cut down out of nine, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood, which said unto God, depart from us; and what can the almighty do for them? *Job. 22. 15. 16. 17. 18.*

There were therefore but eight persons that escaped the wrath of God, in the day that the flood came upon the earth, the rest were ungodly; there was also a world of them, and they are to this day in the prison of hell. *Heb. 6. 11. 6. 1 Pet. 3. 19. 20.*

Nay I must correct my pen, there were but seven of the eight that were good, for *Ham* though he scaped the Judgment of the water, yet the curse of God overtook him to his damnation.

Secondly, when the world began again to be replenished, and people began to multiply therein: how few even in all ages do we reade of, that were saved from the damnation of the world.

1. One *Abraham* and his wife, God called out of the land of the *Caldeans*,

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deans, (I called (said God) Abraham alone *Isa.* 51. 1. 2.

2. One *Lot* out of *Sodom* and *Gomorah*, out of *Adma* and *Zeboim*, one *Lot* out of four cities ; indeed, his wife and two daughters, went out of *Sodom* with him, but they all three proved naught, as you may see in the nineteenth of *Genesis* : wherefore *Peter* observes, that *Lot* only was saved : He turned the cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorah* into ashes, condemning them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that often should live ungodly, and delivered just *Lot*; that righteous man, reade 2. *Pet.* 2. 6. 7. 8.

Jude says, that in this condemnation, God over-threw, not only *Sodom* and *Gomorah*, but the cities about them also : and yet you finde none but *Lot*, could be found that was righteous either in *Sodom* or *Gomorah*, or the cities about them, wherefore they, all of them, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire vers. 7.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, come we now to the time of the *Judges*, how few then were the godly, even then when the inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in *Israel*, the high-ways (of God) were then unoccupied, *Judg.* 5. 6. 7.

Fourthly, there were but few in the days of David; *help Lord* says he, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men. *Psal.* 12. 1.

Fifthly, In *Isaia's* time the saved were come to such a few, that he positively says; but that there were a very small number left, God had made them like *Sodom*, and they had been like unto *Gomorah*, *Isa.* 1. 8, 9.

Sixthly, It was cryed unto them in the time of *Jeremiah*, that they should run to and fro through the streets of *Jerusalem*, and see, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can finde a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it, *Ier.* 5. 1.

Seventhly, God shewed his servant

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vant *Ezekiel* how few there would be saved in his day, by the vision of a few hairs, saved out of the midst of a few hairs; for the saved were a few saved out of a few. *Ezek. 5. 3,4,5.*

Eighthly, you finde in the time of the Prophet *Micha* how the godly complain, that as to *number* they then were, *so few*, that he compares them to those that are left behinde when they had gathered the summer-fruit, *Mic. 7. 1.*

Ninthly, when Christ was come, how did he confirm this truth, *that but few of them that put in claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance.* But the common people could not hear it, and therefore upon a time when he did but a little hint at this truth, the people, even all in the Synagogue where he preached it, were filled with wrath, rose up, thrust him out of the City, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built) that they might cast him down headlong, *Luke 4. 24,25,26,27,28,29.*

Tenthly,

Tenthly, *John*, who was after Christ, saith, that the whole world lies in wickedness, that all the world wondred after the beast, and that power was given to the beast, over all kindreds, tongues and nations; power to do what? why to cause all, both great and small, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive his mark, and to be branded for him : *Joh. 5. 19. Revel. 13. 3, 8, 16.*

Eleventhly, should we come to observation and experience, the shew of the countenance, of the bulk of men, doth witness against them, *they declare their sin like Sodom, they hide it not, Isa. 3. 9.* where is the man that maketh the almighty God his delight, and that designeth his glory in the world; do not even almost all, pursue this world, their lusts and pleasures? and so, consequently, *say unto God, depart from us, for we desire, not the knowledg of thy ways,* or what's the Almighty that we should serve him? it's in vain to serve God, &c.

So

So that without doubt, it will appear a truth in the day of God, *that but few of them, that shall put in their claim to heaven, will have it for their inheritance.*

Before I pass this head, I will shew you to what the saved are compared in the Scriptures.

First, they are compared to an handful, *there shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, &c. Psal. 27. 16.* this corn is nothing else but them that shall be saved, *Matt. 3. 12. chap. 13. 30.*

But mark, there shall be an handful; what's an handful when compared with the whole heap, or what's an handful out of the rest of the world?

Secondly, As they are compared to an handful, so they are compared to a lillie among the thorns, *Song, 2. 2.* which is rare, and not so commonly seen. *As the lillie among thorns, saith Christ, so is my beloved among the daughters, By thorns we understand*
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the worst and best of men, even all that are destitute of the grace of God, *for the best of them is as a bryer, and the most upright of them as a thorn-bedge, Mich. 7. 4. 2 Sam. 23. 6. 2.* I know that she may be called a *lillie amongst thorns* also, because she meets with the pricks of persecution, *Ezek. 2. 6. chap. 29. 24. 3.* she may also be thus termed, to shew the disparitie that is betwixt hypocrites and the Church, *Luk. 8. 14. Heb. 8.* But this is not all, the saved are compared to a *lillie amongst thorns*, to shew you, that they are but few in the world; to shew you, that they are few and rare; for as Christ compares her to a *lillie amongst thorns*, so he compares him to an *apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood*, which is rare, and scarce, not common.

Thirdly, they that are saved, are called but *one of many*, for though there be *threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number*, yet my love, saith Christ, is
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but one, my undefiled is but one, Song. 6. 8. 9. according to that of Jeremiah, *I will take you, one of a city.* Jer. 3. That saying of Paul is much like this, *know you not, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize,* 1 Cor. 9. 24. but one, that is, few of many, few of them that run, for he is not here, comparing them that run, with them that sit still, but with them that run, some run and lose, some run and win; they that run and win, are few in comparison of them that run and lose: *They that run in a race run all, but one receives the prize:* let there then be threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, yet the saved are but few.

Fourthly, they that are the saved, are compared to the *gleaning after the vintage is in*: *wo is me,* said the Church, *for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruit, as the grape gleanings after the vintage is in,* Mich. 7. 1. The gleanings! what's the
E gleanings

gleanings to the whole crop? and yet you here see, *to the gleanings* are the saved compared; 'tis the devil and sin that carry away the cart-loads, while Christ and his ministers come after a gleanings: *But the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim are better then the vintage of Abiezer, Jud. 8.* Them that Christ and his ministers glean up and binde up in the bundle of life, are better then the loads that go the other way: you know it is often the cry of the poor in harvest, *poor gleanings, poor gleanings*: And the ministers of the Gospel, they also cry, *Lord who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53 1.*

When the prophet speaks of the saved under this metaphor of gleanings, how doth he amplify the matter? *Gleaning grapes shall be left, says he, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five, in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord. Isa. 17. 6.* Thus you see what

what gleanings are left in the vineyard, after the vintage is in, two or three here, four or five there. Alas ! they that shall be saved, when the devil and hell have had their due, they will be but as the gleanings, they will be but few, they that go to hell, go thither in clusters, but the saved go not so to heaven, *Matt. 13. 30.*

Mich. 7. wherefore when the prophet speaketh of the saved, he saith, *there is no cluster*, but when he speaketh of the damned, he saith, they are gathered by clusters, *Revel. 14. 18.* 19. O sinners, but few will be saved. O professors, but few will be saved !

Fifthly, they that shall be saved, are compared to jewels ; *And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels. Malachi, 3. 13.* Jewels, you know, are rare things, things that are not found in every house. Jewels will lie in little room, being few and small ; though lumber takes up much ; In almost every house, you may find brass, and

iron, and lead; and in every place you may finde hypocritical professors, but the saved are not these common things: they are Gods peculiar treasure, *Psal. 35. 4.* wherefore Paul distinguisheth betwixt the lumber, and the treasure in the house; there is, saith he, *in a great house, not only vessels of gold and of silver; but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 2. Tim. 2. 20.* here is a word for wooden and earthy professors, the jewels and treasure are vessels to honour, they of wood & earth are vessels of dishonour, that is, vessels for destruction. *Rom. 9. 21.*

Sixthly, they that shall be saved are compared to a remnant; except the Lord had left in us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah: *Isa. 1. 9.* A remnant, a small remnant, a very small remnant: O how doth the holy Ghost word it, and all to shew you, how few shall be saved: every one knows, what a
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remnant is, but this is a small remnant, a very small remnant. So again, sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations, publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel; Jer. 31. 7. What shall I say, the saved are often in Scripture called, a remnant, Ezr. 9. 8, 14. Isa. 10. 20, 21, 22. chap. 10. 11, 16. Jer. 23. 3. Joel 2. 32. But what's a remnant, to the whole piece: what's a remnant of people to the whole kingdom, or what's a remnant of wheat to the whole harvest.

Eightly, the saved are compared to the tithe, or tenth part, wherefore when God sendeth the prophet to make the hearts of the people fat, their ears dull, and to shut their eyes: The prophet asketh, how long! to which God answereth, until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed man far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the

land: but yet, (as God saith in another place, *I will not make a full end,*) *in it shall be a tenth, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof*; Isa. 6. 10. 11. 12. 13. but what's a tenth: what's one in ten? and yet so speaks the holy Ghost when he speaks of the *holy seed*, of those that was to be reserved from the Judgment; and observe it, the satning, and blinding of the rest, it was to their everlasting destruction, and so both Christ and Paul expounds it often in the new Testament. *Matt. 13. 14. 15. Mar. 4. 12. Luk. 8. 10. Job. 12. 40. Acts. 28. 26. Rom. 11. 8.* So that those that are reserved from them that perish, will be very few, one in ten. *A tenth shall return, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*

I shall not add more generals at this time, I pray God that the world be not offended at these: but without doubt, *but few of them that shall put in their claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance*; which will yet

yet further appear in the reading of that which follows.

Secondly, therefore I come more particularly to shew you, that *but few will be saved*, I say, but *few of professors themselves will be saved*, for that is the truth that the text doth more directly look at and defend. Give me therefore thy hand (good reader) and let us soberly walk through the rest of what shall be said, and let us compare as we go each particuler with the holy Scripture.

First, 'tis said, *The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vinyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged citie* Isa. 18. The vineyard was the Church of *Israel*, Isa. 5. 1. the cottage in that vinyard, was the daughter of *Zion*, or the truly gracious amongst or in that Church : a cottage: God had but a cottage there, but a little habitation in the Church, a very few that were truly gracious amongst that great multitude that professed; and had it not been for

these, for this cottage, the rest had been ruined as *Sodom: Except the Lord if hosts had left in us, in the Church, a very few, they had been as Sodom: v.9.* wherefore among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

Secondly, *for though thy psople Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall return, a remnant shall be saved. Isa. 10.22. Ro. 9.27.* for though *thy people Israel:* whom thou brought'st out of *Egypt*, to whom thou hast given Church-constitution, holy laws, holy ordinances, holy prophets, and holy covenants: *thy people*, by separation from all people, and *thy people* by profession: though this *thy people* be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: wherefore among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

Thirdly, *Reprobate silver shall men call them because the Lord hath rejected them; Jer. 6. 30.* the people here under

der consideration, are called in *verse* 27. *Gods people*, his people by profession. *I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people*, that thou maiest know and try their way, what follows? *They are all grievous revolters, walking with standers, reprobate silver, the Lord hath rejected them.* In chapter 7. *ver. 29.* they are called also the generation of his wrath: *for the Lord hath rejected, and forsaken the generation of his wrath.* This therefore I gather out of these holy Scriptures; that with reference to profession, and Church-constitution, a people may be called the people of God, but with reference to the event and final conclusion that God will make with some of them, they may be truly the generation of his wrath.

Fourthly, In the 5. of *Isa.* you read again of the *vinyard of God*, and that it was planted on a very fruitful hill, planted with the choicest vines, had a wall, a tower, a wine-press belonging to it, and all things that

could put it into right order and good government, as a Church, but this vinyard of the Lord of hosts brought forth wild grapes, fruits unbecoming her constitution and government, wherefore the Lord takes from her his hedge and wall, and lets her be troden down: reade Christs exposition upon it in *Matt. 2. and 33. &c.* look to it professors, these are the words of the text, *for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Fifthly, *Son of man, said God to the Prophet, the house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass and tin, and iron and lead, in the midst of the furnace, they are the dross of silver: Ezek. 22. 18.* God had silver there, some silver, but it was but little, the bulk of that people was but the dross of the Church, though they were the members of it, but what doth he mean by the dross? why he looked upon them as no better, notwithstanding their Church-membership, then the
rabble

rabble of the world, that is, with respect to their latter end, for to be called dross, it is to be put among the rest of the sinners of the world in the judgment of God, though at present they abide in his house: *Then puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross, therefore I love thy testimonies, Psal. 119. 119.*

God saith of his saved ones, *he hath chosen them in the furnace of affliction.* The refiner, when he putteth his silver into his furnace, he puts lead in also among it; now this lead being ordered as he knows how, works up the dross from the silver, which dross still as it riseth, he putteth by, or taketh away with an instrument; and thus deals God with his Church, there is silver in his Church, I, and there is also dross; now the dross are the hypocrites, and graceless ones that are got into the Church, and these will God discover and afterwards put away as dross. So that it will without doubt prove a truth of
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God, that many of their professors that shall put in claim for heaven, will not have it for their inheritance.

Sixthly, It is said of Christ, *his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather his wheat into his garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Mat. 3. 12.*

1. The floor, is the Church of God. (*O my threshing and the corn of my floor,*) said God by the prophet, *Isa. 21. 10.* to his people,

2. The wheat are those good ones in his Church that shall be undoubtedly saved, therefore he saith, *gather my wheat into my garner.*

3. The chaff groweth upon the same stalk, and ear, and so is in the same visible body with the wheat, but there is not substance in it, wherefore in time, they must be severed one from the other, the wheat must be gathered into the garner, which is heaven: and the chaff, or professors, that want true grace, must be gathered

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red into hell, that they may be *burned up with unquenchable fire* : therefore let professors look to it.

Seventhly, Christ Jesus casts away two of the three grounds that are said to receive the word, *Luk. 8. The stony ground, received it with joy, and the thorny ground brought forth fruit almost to perfection* : indeed the high-way ground was to shew us that the *carnal*, while such, receive not the word at all, but here is the pinch, two of the three that received it, fell short of the kingdom of heaven ; for but *one* of the three received it, so as to bring forth fruit to perfection ; look to it professors.

Eighthly, The parable of the *unprofitable servant*, the parable of the *man without a wedding garment*, and the parable of the *unsavoury salt*, do each of them justify this for truth *Mat. 25. 24, 25. chap. 22. 11, 12, 13. chap. 5. 13. that of the unprofitable servant*, is to shew us, the sloth and idleness of some professors ; that of the *man with-*

out a wedding-garment, is to shew us, how some professors have the shame of their wickedness seen by God, even when they are among the children of the bridgroom; and that parable of *the unsavory salt*, is to shew, that as the salt that hath lost its favor is fit for nothing, no, not for the dunghill, but to be troden under the foot of men; So some professors (yea and great ones too, for this parable reached *one* of the Apostles :) will in Gods day be counted fit for nothing but to be troden down as the mire in the streets: oh the slothful, the naked and unsavory professors, how will they be rejected of God and his Christ, in the judgment; look to it professors.

Ninthly, The parable of the *tares* also; giveth countenance to this truth: for though it be said, *the field is the world*, yet it is said, the tares were sown even in the Church; *And while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way:*

way: *Matt. 13. 24, 25.*

Obj. But some may object, the tares might be sowed in the world among the wheat, though not in the Churches.

Answer; But Christ by expounding this parable tells us, the tares were sown in his kingdom (the tares, that is, the children of the devil, *ver. 30. 39.* *As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them that do iniquitie, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, ver. 40. 41. 42. 43.* look to it professors.

Tenthly, the parable of the ten virgins also, suiteth our purpose; them ten are called *the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 25. 1.* that is, the Church of Christ, the visible rightly-constituted Church of Christ, for they went all out of the world, had all lamps and
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all went forth to meet the bridegroom, yet behold what an overthrow the one half of them met with at the gate of heaven, they were shut out, bid to depart, and Christ told them he did not know them, *ver.* 10. 11. tremble professors, pray professors.

Eleventhly, the parable of the net that was cast into the sea, *Matt.* 13. 41. 42. that also countenanceth this truth: the substance of that parable is to shew, that souls may be gathered by the Gospel, there compared to a net, may be kept in that net, drown to shore, to the worlds end by that net; and yet may then prove bad fishes, and be cast away: the parable runs thus, *The kingdom of heaven (the Gospel) is like unto a net, which was cast into the sea (the world) and gathered of every kind (good and bad) which when it was full, they drew it to shore (to the end of the world) and sat down (in judgment) and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the*
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bad away : some bad fishes ; nay I doubt a great many will be found in the net of the Gospel, at the day of Judgment ; watch and be sober, professors.

Twelfthly, *and many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and the children of the kingdom shall be cast out. Matt. 8. 12.* The children of the kingdom whose privileges were said to be these, *to whom pertained the Adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promise : Rom. 9. 4.* I take liberty to harp the more upon the first Church, because that that happened to them, hapned as types and examples, intimating there is ground to think, that things of as dreadful a nature are to happen among the Church of the gentiles, *1 Cor. 10. 11. 12.* neither indeed have the gentile-Churches security from God, that there shall not as
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dreadful things happen to them. And concerning this very thing sufficient caution is given to us also, 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10. Gal. 5. 19. 20. 21. Ephes. 5. 3. 4. 5. 6. Phil. 3. 10. 19. 2. Thes. 2. 11. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 20. 21. 2 Heb. 6. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. chap. 10. 26. 27. 28. 2 Pet. 2. chap. 3. 1 Job. 5. 10. Revel. 2. 20. 21. 22.

Thirteenthly, the parable of the *true vine and its branches*, confirm what I have said, Job. 15. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. By the vine there, I understand Christ, Christ as head; by the branches I understand his Church, some of these branches proved fruitless cast-aways, were in time cast out of the Church, were gathered by men and burned.

Fourteenthly, and Lastly, I will come to particular instances.

1. The twelve had a devil among them. Job. 6. 70.

2. *Ananias and Saphira* were in the Church of *Jerusalem*, Acts. 5.

3. *Simon Magnus* was among them

at

at *Samaria*, *Acts*. 8.

4. Among the Church of *Corinth* were them that had not the knowledge of God *1 Cor* 15.

5. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, false brethren crept in unawares, and so does the Apostle *Jude*, and yet they were as quick-sighted to see as any now adays, *Gala*. 2. *Jude*. 3. 4.

6. The Church in *Sardis* had but a few names in her to whom the kingdom of heaven belonged, *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

7. As for the Church of the *Laodiceans*, it is called a wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, *Rev*. 3. So that put all things together, and I may boldly say as I also have said already, *That among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party; or to speak in the words of the observation, when men have put*

in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance.

I will now shew you some reasons of the point, besides those five that I shewed you before.

But first, I will shew you why the poor carnall ignorant world miss of heaven, and then why the knowing professors miss of it also.

First, the poor carnal ignorant world miss of heaven, even because they love their sins, and cannot part with them; *men love darkness rather then light because their deeds be evil, Job. 3.* the poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they are enemies in their minds to God, his word and holyness: *They all must be damned who take pleasure in unrighteousness; 2 Thes. 2. 10. 11. 12.* The poor ignorant world miss of heaven because they stop their ears against convictions, and refuse to come when God calls, *because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but have set at nought* all

all my counsels; and would none of my reproofs; I also will laugh at your calamities, and mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction like a whirlwinde, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall you call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but shall not finde me; *Pro. 1. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28.*

Secondly, the poor ignorant world miss of heaven because the God of this world hath blinded their eyes; that they can neither see the evil, and damnable state they are in at present, nor the way to get out of it, neither do they see the beauty of Jesus Christ, nor how willing he is to save poor sinners *2 Cor. 4. 2. 3.*

Thirdly, the poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they putt off and defer coming to Christ, until the time of Gods patience and grace is over: some indeed are resolved never to come, but some again say, we will come hereafter, and so it comes to pass, that *because God called and they*

they did not hear, so they shall cry and I will not hear, saith the Lord. Zech. 7. 11. 12. 13.

Fourthly, the poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they have false apprehensions of Gods mercy, they say in their hearts, we shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: but what saith the word, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smite against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall be upon him, and God shall blot out his name from under heaven. Dent. 29. 19, 20, 21.

Fifthly, the poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they make light of the Gospel that offereth mercy to them freely, and because they lean upon their own good meanings and thinkings and doings, Matt. 22: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Rom. 9. 30, 31.

Sixthly, The poor carnal world miss of heaven, because by unbelief, which reigns in them, they are kept
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for ever from being cloathed with Christs righteousness, and from washing in his blood, without which there is neither remission of sin, nor justification.

But to pass these till anon.

I come in the next place to shew you some reasons why the professor falls short of heaven.

First, In the general, they rest in things below special grace, as in awakenings that are not special, in repentance that is not special, in faith that is not special, &c. and a little to run the parallel betwixt the one and the other, that if God will, you may see and escape.

1. Have they that shall be saved awakenings about their state by nature, so have they that shall be damned: they that never go to heaven may see much of sin and of the wrath of God due thereto: this had *Cain*, and *Judas*, and yet they came short of the kingdom. *Gen. 4. Matt. 27. 4.*
The saved have convictions in order

to their eternal life, but the others convictions are not so: the convictions of the one doth drive them sincerely to Christ, the convictions of the other doth drive them to the law, and the law to desperation at last.

2. There are also convictions that shew a man his necessity of Christ, but wanting grace to lay hold effectually on Christ, they joyn the law also with the Savior, and so perish, or through despair of obtaining the power of grace, they rest in the notions and profession of grace, and so perish.

3. There is a repentance that will not save, a repentance to be repented of, and a repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. yet so great a similitude, and likeness there is betwixt the one and the other, that most times the wrong is taken for the right, and through this mistake professors perish.

As 1. In saving repentance there will be an acknowledgement of sin; and

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and one that hath the other repentance may acknowledg his sins also, *Matt. 27. 4.*

2. In saving repentance there is a crying out under sin, but one that hath the other repentance may cry out under sin also, *Gen. 4. 13.*

3. In saving repentance there will be humiliation for sin, and one that hath the other repentance may humble himself also, *1 King. 21. 29.*

4. Saving repentance is attended with self-loathing, but he that hath the other repentance may have loathing of sin too, *2 Pet. 2. 22.* a loathing of sin, *because it is sin*, that he cannot have, but a loathing of sin *because it is offensive to him*, that he may have: the dog doth not loath that which troubleth his stomach because it is there, but because it troubleth him; when it has done troubling of him, he can turn to it again, and lick it up as before it troubled him.

5. Saving repentance is attended with prayers and tears, but he that hath

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none

none but the other repentance, may have prayers and tears also. *Gen.* 27. 34, 35. *Heb.* 12. 14, 15, 16.

6. In saving repentance there is fear and reverence of the word, and Ministers, that bring it; but this may be also where there is none but the repentance that is not saving: for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and holy, and observed him; when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly, *Mark.* 6. 20.

7. Saving repentance makes a mans heart very tender of doing any thing against the word of God: But Balaam could say, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, *Numb.* 24. 13. Behold, then how far a man may go in repentance, and yet be short of that which is called repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.

1. He may be awakened. 2. he may acknowledge his sin. 3. he may cry out under the burden of sin. 4. he may have humility for it. 5. he may
loath

loath it. 6. may have prayers and tears against it. 7. may delight to do many things of God. 8. may be afraid of sinning against him, and after all this may perish for want of saving repentance.

Secondly, Have they that *shall* be saved, *faith*; why they that *shall not* be saved, *may have faith also*. Yea a faith in many things, *so like* the faith that *saveth*, that they can *hardly* be distinguished (though they differ, both in root and branch:) to come to particulars.

1. Saving faith hath Christ for its object, and so may the faith have that is not saving; those very *Jews*, of whom it is said, they believed on Christ; Christ tells them, and that after their believing: *you are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. Jo. 8. from v. 30. to v. 44*

2. Saving faith is wrought by the word of God, and so may the faith be, that is not saving, *Luk. 3. 13.*

3. Saving faith looks for justifi-

on without works, and so may a faith do that is not saving, *Jam. 2. 18.*

4. Saving faith will sanctifie and purify the heart and the faith that is not saving may work a man off from the pollutions of the world, as it did *Judas* and *Demas*, and others, see *2 Pet. 2.*

5. Saving faith will give a man taste of the world to come, and also joy by them taste, and so will the faith do that is not saving, *Heb. 6. 4. 5. Luk. 8. 13.*

6. Saving faith will help a man, if called thereto, to give his body to be burned for his religion, and so will the faith do to that is not saving, *1 Cor. 13. 1. 2. 3. 4.*

7. Saving faith will help a man to look for an inheritance in the world to come, and that may the faith do that is not saving : *all those virgins took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom, Matt. 25. 1.*

8. Saving faith will not only make a man look for, but prepare to meet the

the bridegroom, and so may the faith do that is not saving ; *then all these virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, Matt. 25. 7.*

9. Saving faith will make a man look for an interest in the kingdom of heaven with confidence, and the faith that is not saving will even demand entrance of the Lord : *Lord, Lord, open unto us ; Matt. 25. 11.*

10. Saving faith will have good works follow it *into heaven*, and the faith that is not saving, may have great works follow it, *as far as to heaven gates. Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works. Matt. 7. 22.*

Now then, if the faith that is not saving, may have Christ for its object, he wrought by the word, look for justification without works, work men off from the pollutions of the world, and give men taits of, and joy in the things of another world ; I say, again, if it will help a man to burn

for his Judgment, and to look for an inheritance in another world, yet if it will help a man to to prepare for it, claim interest in it, and if it can carry great works, many great and glorious works as far as heaven gates, then no marvel if abundance of people take this faith for the saving faith, and so fall short of heaven thereby. Alas friends! there are but few that can produce such for repentance, and such faith, as yet you see, I have proved even reprobates have had in several ages of the Church. But,

Thirdly, they that go to heaven are a praying people, but a man may pray that shall not be saved; pray! he may pray, pray dayly, yea, he may ask of God the ordinances of Justice, and may take delight in approaching to God, nay further, such souls may as it were cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and crying out, *Isa 28. 2. Mala. 12. 13.*

Fourthly, do Gods people keep holy-

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holy-fasts, they that are not his people may keep fasts also, may keep fasts often, even twice a week, *The pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself, God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Luk. 16. 11. 12.* I might enlarge upon things, but I intend but a little book: I do not question but many *Balaamites* will appear before the Judgment-seat to condemnation: men that have had visions of God, and that knew the knowledge of the most high, men that have had the spirit of God come upon them, and that have by that been made other men, yet these shall go to the generations of their fathers, they shall never see light: *Numb. 24. 2. 4. 16. 1 Sam. 10. 6. 10. Psal. 49. 19.*

I reade of some men, whose excellency in religion mounts up to the heavens, and their head reaches unto the clouds, who yet shall perish for ever
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like their own dung, and he, that in this world hath seen them, shall say, at the Judgment, where are they? *Job. 20. 5. 6. 7.* There will many an one that were gallant professors in this world, be wanting among the saved in the day of Christs coming: yea many whose damnation was never dream't of: which of the twelve ever thought that Judas would have proved a devil? nay, when Christ suggested that one among them were naught, they each were more afraid of themselves then of him: *Matt. 26. 21. 22. 23.* who questioned the salvation of the foolish virgins, the wise ones did not, they gave them the priviledge of communion with themselves: *Matt. 25.* The discerning of the heart; and the infallible proof of the truth of saving-grace, is reserved to the Judgment of Jesus Christ at his coming; the Church and best of saints, sometimes hit, and sometimes miss in their judgments about this matter; and the cause of our missing in our judgment,
is;

is; 1. partly because we cannot infallibly, at all times, distinguish grace that saveth, from that which doth but appear to do so. 2. partly also because some men have the art to give right names to wrong things. 3. and partly because we being commanded to receive *him that is weak*, are afraid to exclude the least Christian, by a hid means; hypocrites creep into the Churches, but what saith the Scripture? *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins: And again, all the Churches shall know that I am he that searches the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you, according to your works: Jer. 11. 20. chap. 17. 10. Revel. 2. 23.* To this searcher of hearts, is the time of infallible discerning reserved, and then you shall see how far grace that is not saving, hath gone; and also how few will be saved indeed. The Lord awaken poor sinners by my little book.

I come now to make some brief Use and Application of the whole:

and my first word shall be to the open profane : poor sinner, thou readest here, that but a few will be saved, that many that expect heaven, will go without heaven ; what saist thou to this, poor sinner ? Let me say it over again : There are but few to be saved, but very few, let me add, but few professors ; but few eminent professors ; what saist thou now sinner ? *If Judgment begins at the house of God, what will the end of them be that obey not the Gospel of God ?* This is *Peters* question, canst thou answer it, sinner ? yea, I say again, if judgement must begin at them, will it not make thee think, what shall become of me ? and I add, when thou shalt see the stars of heaven to tumble down to hell, canst thou think that such a muck-heap of sin as thou art, shalt be lifted up to heaven ? *Peter* asks thee another question, to witt, *If the righteous scarcely be saved ; where shall the ungodly, and sinners appear ?* 1 Pet. 14. 18,

19. canst thou answer this question sinner? stand among the righteous thou maiest not; (*the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous: Psal. 1. 5.*) stand among the wicked thou then wilt not dare to do; where wilt thou appear sinner? to stand among the hypocrits will avail thee nothing: *the hypocrite shall not come before him,* that is, with acceptance, but shall perish: *Jeb. 13. 16.* Because it concerns thee much, let me over with it again: when thou shalt see lesse sinners then thou art bound up by angels in bundles to burn them, where wilt thou appear sinner? Thou maiest wish thy self another man, but that will not help thee sinner; thou maiest wish, *would I had been converted in time,* but that will not help thee neither; and if like the wife of *Jeroboam*, thou shouldest fain thy self to be another woman, the prophet, the Lord Jesus would soon finde thee out; what wilt thou do poor sinner: heavy tidings,
heavy

heavy tidings will attend thee, except thou repent, poor sinner! 1 *King.* 14. 2, 5, 6. *Luk.* 13. 3, 5. O the dreadful state of a poor sinner, of an open profane sinner: every body that hath but common sense knows that this man is in the broad way to death, yet he laughs at his own damnation.

Shall I come to particulars with thee?

1. *Poor unclean sinner*, the harlots house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death: *Pro.* 2. 18. chap. 5. 5. chap. 7. 27.

2. *Poor swearing, and theivish sinner*, God hath prepared the curse, that every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to it, and every one that swareth, shall be cut off on that side, according to it. *Zech.* 5. 3.

3. *Poor drunken sinner*, what shall I say to thee - Wo to the drunkards of Ephreim; wo them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strong drink; they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. *Isa.* 28. chap. 5. 11, 12. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10.

4. *Poor*

4. Poor covetous worldly man, Gods word saies, that the covetous the Lord abhorreth; that the covetous man is an idolater, and that the covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Psal. 10. 3. Ephes. 5. 5. Joh. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

5. And thou lyar: what wilt thou do? All lyars shall have their part in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: Revel. 21. 8, 27.

I shall not inlarge, poor sinner, let no man deceive thee, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience: Ephes. 5. 6. I will therefore give thee a short call and so leave thee.

Sinner awake, yea, I say, unto thee awake: sin lieth at thy door, and Gods axe lieth at thy root, and hell-fire is right underneath thee: I say again, awake. Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Gen. 4. 7. Matt. 3. 10.

Poor sinner awake, eternity is coming, & his son, they are both coming to judge

judge the world, awake ; art yet asleep ? poor sinner ! let me set the trumpet to thine ear once again. The heavens will be shortly on a burning flame, the earth and the works thereof shall be burned up, and then wicked men shall go into perdition, dost thou hear this sinner ? *2 Pet. 3.*

Hark again, the sweet morsels of sins will then be fled, and gone, and the bitter burning fruits of them only left, what saist thou now sinner ? canst thou drink hell-fire ? will the wrath of God be a pleasant dish to thy taste ? this must be thine every days meat and drink in hell, sinner.

I will yet propound to thee Gods ponderous question, and then for this time leave thee. *Can thine heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee saith the Lord ? Ezek. 22. 14.* what saist thou ? wilt thou answer this question now ? or wilt thou take time to do it ? or wilt thou be desperate and venture all ? And let me put this text in thine ear

ear to keep it open, and so the Lord have mercy upon thee; *upon the wicked shall the Lord rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup: Psal. 11. 6.* repent sinners.

Secondly, my second word is to them that are upon the potters wheel, concerning whom, we know not, as yet, whether their convictions, and awaknings will end in conversion or no; several things I should say to you, both to further your convictions, and to caution you from staying any where below, or short of saving grace.

1. Remember that but few shall be saved, and if God should count thee worthy to be one of that few, what a mercy would that be. *Ephes. 2. 45.*

2. Be thankful therefore for convictions, conversion begins at conviction, though all conviction doth not end in conversion. It is a great mercy to be convinced that we are sinners, and that we need a Saviour, count it therefore a mercy, and that thy convictions

ctions may end in conversion; do thou

1. Take heed of stiffling of them : it is the way of poor sinners, to look upon convictions, as things that are hurtful, and therefore they use to shun the awakening ministry, and to check a convincing conscience : such poor sinners, are much like to the wanton boy that stands at the maids elbow to blow out her candle as fast as she lights it at the fire : convinced sinner, God lighteth thy candle, and thou putt'st it out ; God lights it again, and thou putt'st it out ; (*yea how oft is the candle of the wicked put out ? Job. 21. 17.* At last God resolveth he will light thy candle no more, and then like the *Egyptians*, you dwell all your days in darkness, and never see light more, but by the light of hell-fire; wherefore *give glory to God*, and if he awakens thy conscience, quench not thy convictions, do it, saith the prophet, *before he cause darkness, and before your feet tumble upon the dark mountains*; and he turn your convictions

ons

ons into the shadow of death, and make them gross darkness. *Jer. 13. 16.*

1. Be willing to see the worst of thy condition, 'tis better to see it here, then in hell: for thou maiest see thy misery here or there.

2. Beware of little sins, they will make way for great ones, and they again will make way for bigger, upon which Gods wrath will follow, and then may thy latter end be worse then thy beginning *2 Pet. 20.*

3. Take heed of bad company, and evil communications, for that will corrupt good manners: God saith, *evil company will turn thee away from following him, and will tempt thee to serve other Gods, devils: so the anger of the Lord, will be kindled against thee, and destroy thee suddenly, Deut. 7. 3.*

4. Beware of such a thought as bids thee delay repentance, for that is damnable, *Pro. 1. 24. Zec. 7. 12. 13.*

5. Beware of taking example by some poor carnal professor, whose religion lies in the tip of his tongue.

beware

Beware I say of the man whose head swims with notions, but his life is among the unclean, *Job. 36. 14. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed, Pro. 13. 20.*

6. Give thy self much to the word, and prayer, and good conference.

7. Labour to see the sin that cleaveth to the best of thy performances and know that all is nothing if thou beest not found in Jesus Christ.

8. Keep in remembrance that Gods eye is upon thy heart, and upon all thy wayes : *can any hide himself in secret places that I should not see him saith the Lord ? do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord ? Jer. 23. 24.*

9. Be often imeditating upon death, and judgment. *Eccle. 11. 9 chap 12. 14.*

10. Be often thinking what a dreadful end, sinners, that have neglected Christ, will make at that day of death, and judgment : *Heb. 10. 31.*

11. Put thy self often, in thy thoughts, before Christs judgment-seat,

seat, in thy sins, and consider with thy self, were I now before my judge, how should I look, how should I shake and tremble.

12. Be often thinking of them that are now in hell past all mercy, I say, be often thinking of them, thus,

1. They were *once* in the world, as I now am.

2. They once took delight in sin, as I have done.

3. They once neglected repentance as Satan would have me do.

4. But now they are gone, now they are in hell, now the pit hath shut her mouth upon them.

Thou mayest also doubt thy thoughts of the damned, thus.

1. If these poor creatures were in the world again, would they sin as they did before? would they neglect salvation as they did before?

2. If they had sermons, *as I have*; if they had the bible, *as I have*; if they had good company, *as I have*; yea if they had a day of grace, *as I have*; would

would they neglect it as they did before? sinner, couldest thou soberly think of these things they might help (God blessing them) to awaken thee, and to keep thee awake to repentance, to the repentance that is to salvation never to be repented of.

Object. But you have said; few shall be saved, and some that go a great way, yet are not saved; at this therefore, I am even discouraged, and awakned: I think I had as good go no further, I am indeed under conviction, but I may perish, & if I go on in my sins I can but perish, and 'tis ten, twenty, a hundred to one, if I be saved should I be never so earnest for heaven.

Ans. That few will be saved must needs be a truth, for Christ hath said it; that many go far, and come short of heaven, is as true, being testified by the same hand; but what then? why then I had as good never seek: who told thee so? must no body seek, because few are saved, this is

just

just contrary to the text, that bids us, *therefore strive: strive to enter in, because the gate is strait, and because many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* But why go back again, seeing that is the next way to hell, never go over hedge and ditch to hell, if I must needs go thither, I will go the farthest way about; but who can tell though there should not be saved so many as there shall, but thou mayst be one of that few. They that miss of life perish because they will not let go their sins, or because they take up in profession short of the saving faith of the Gospel: They perish I say, because they are content with such things as will not prove graces of a saving nature, then they come to be tryed in the fire, otherwise the promise is free and full, and everlasting. *Him that cometh to me, says Christ, I will in no wise cast out: for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life. Joh.*

6. 37. wherefore let not this thought, *few shall be saved*, weaken thy heart, but let it cause thee to mend thy pace, to mend thy crys, to look well to thy grounds for heaven; let it make thee fly faster from sin, to Christ, let it keep thee awake and out of carnal security, and thou maist be saved.

Thirdly, my third word is to professors, sirs, give me leave to set my trumpet to *your* ears again a little, *when every man hath put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance.* I mean but few professors, for so the text intendeth, and so I have also proved, *for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Let me therefore a little expostulate the matter with you, O ye thousands of professors.

First, I begin with you whose religion lieth only in your tongues, I mean you who are little or nothing known from the rest of the rabble of the world, only you can talk better
then

then they : hear me a word or two. *If I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, that is, love to God, and Christ, and saints, and holyness, I am nothing, no child of God ; and so have nothing to do with heaven, 1 Cor. 13. a prating tongue will not unlock the gates of heaven, nor blinde the eyes of thy judge ; look to it : the wise in heart will receive commandments but a prating fool shall fall : Pro. 10. 8.*

Secondly, covetous professor, thou that mak'st a gain of religion, that u-
fist thy profession to bring grist to thy mill ; look to it also, gain is not god-
lyness ; *Judas's* religion lay much in the bag, but his soul is now burning in hell ; all covetousness is Idolatry, but what is *that* or what will you call it, when men are religions for filthy lucre sake, *Ezek. 33. 31.*

Thirdly, wanton professors I have a word for you ; I mean, you that can tell how to misplead Scripture, to maintain your pride, your ban-
queting,

queting, and abominable idolatry : *reade what Peter says, you are the snare and damnation of others ; you allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error, 2 Pet. 2. 18.* besides the holy Ghost hath a great deal against you, for your feasting, and eating without fear, not for health, but gluttony : *Jud. 12. further Peter saies, that you that count it pleasure to riot in the day time, are spots and blemishes, sporting your selves with your own deceivings. 2 Pet. 2. 13.* And let me ask, did God give his word to justifie your wickedness, or doth grace teach you to plead for the flesh, or the waking provision for the lusts thereof; of these, also are they that feed their bodies to strengthen their lusts under pretence of strengthening frail nature. But pray remember the text, *many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Fourthly, I come next to the opinionist,

try : *zeionist*, I mean to him whose religion lieth in some circumstantial of religion ; with this sort this kingdom swarms at this day ; these think all out of the way that are not of their mode, when themselves may be out of the way in the midst of their zeal for their opinions, pray do you also observe the text, *many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, & shall not be able.*

Fifthly, neither is the *formalist* exempted from this number : he is a man that hath *lost all* but the *shell* of religion, he is not indeed for his form, and no marvel, for that is his *all* to contend for, but his form being without the power and spirit of godliness, it will leave him in his sins ; nay, he standeth now in them, in the sight of God, *2 Tim. 3. 5. and is one of the many that will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Sixthly, The *legalist* comes next, even him that hath no life but what he makes out of duties, this man, hath chosen to stand and fall by *Moses* who

is the condemner of the world, *there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust.* Joh. 5. 45.

Seventhly, There is in the next place the *libertine*, he that pretendeth to be against forms, and duties, as things that gender to bondage, neglecting the order of God : this man pretends to pray always, but under that pretence, prays not at all ; he pretends to keep every day a sabbath, but this pretence serves him only to cast off all set times for the worship of God. *This is also one of the many that will seek to enter in and shall not be able.* Tit. 1. 16.

Eightly, There is the *temporizing Latitudinarian*, he is a man that hath no God but his belly, nor any religion but that by which his belly is worshipped, his religion is always like the times, turning this way and that way, like the cock on the steeple, neither hath he any conscience but a benumbed or seared one, and is next door to a down right athiest, *and also is one of*
them

here s in them many that will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Ninthly, There is also the wilfully ignorant professor, or him that is afraid to know more, for fear of the cross; he is for picking and chusing of truth, and loveth not to hazzard his all for that worthy name by which he would be called: when he is at any time overset by arguments, or awakenings of conscience, he uses to heal all, by, *I was not brought up in this faith*, as if it were unlawful for Christians to know more then hath been taught them at first conversion, there are many Scriptures that lie against this man, *as the mouths of great guns*, and he is one of the many that will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

Tenthly, we will add to all these, the professor that would prove himself a Christian by comparing himself with others, instead of comparing himself with the word of God. This man comforts himself because he is as holy as such, and such: he also knows

as much as that old professor, and then concludes he shall go to heaven: as if he certainly knew, that those with whom he compareth himself would be undoubtedly saved, but how if he should be mistaken, nay may they not both fall short; but to be sure he is in the wrong that hath made the comparison. 2 Cor. 10. 12. and a wrong foundation will not stand in the day of Judgment. This man therefore *is one of the many that will seek to enter in & shall not be able.*

Eleventhly, There is yet another professor; and he is for God and for Baal too, he can be *any thing*, for *any* company: he can throw stones with both hands, his religion alters as fast as his company: he is a frog of *Egypt* and can live *in* the water, and *out* of the water, he can live in religious company and again as well out, *nothing* that is *disorderly* comes a misse to him, he'll *hold* with the *hair*, and *run* with the *hound*, he carries *fire* in *one* hand, and *water* i'th *t'other*; he is a
very

very any thing but what he should be :
*This is also one of the many that will
seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Twelfthly, There is also that free-
willer who denies to the holy Ghost
the sole work in conversion, and that
Socinian, who denieth to Christ that
he hath made to God satisfaction for
sin : and that Quaker who takes from
Christ the true natures in his person,
& I might add as many more : touch-
ing whose damnation (they dying as
they are) the Scripture is plain: *these
will seek to enter in & shall not be able.*

But Fourthly, if it be so, what a
strange disapointment, wil many pro-
fessors meet with at the day of Judg-
ment : I speak not now to the open
profaner, every body (as I have
said) that hath but common under-
standing between good and evil,
knows that they are in the broad
way to hell and damnation, and they
must needs come thither, nothing can
hinder it, but repentance unto salvati-
on, except God should prove a liar to

save them, & tis hard ventring of that.

Neither is it amiss, if we take notice of the examples that are briefly mentioned in the Scriptures concerning professors that have miscarried.

1. *Judas* perished from among the Apostles. *Acts. 1.* 2. *Demas* as I think perished from among the Evangelists *2 Tim. 4. 10.* 3. *Diotrephes* from among the Ministers, or them in office in the Church. *3 Joh. 9. 10.* 4. And as for Christian professors, they have fell by heaps, and almost by whole Churches, *2 Tim. 1. 15. Revel. 3. 4. 15. 16. 17.* 5. Let us adde to these, that the things mentioned in the Scriptures about these matters, are but brief hints, and *items* of what is afterwards to happen; as the Apostle said; *some mens sins are open before hand, going before unto judgment, and some men they follow after, 1 Tim. 5. 24.* So that, fellow-professor, let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into this rest, any of us should seem to come short of it: O to come short! nothing

hals

that. kilns like it, nothing will burn like it.
no. I intend not discouragements but
fly awaknings, the Churches have need
rn- of awakning and so hath all profes-
he sors, do not despise me therefore, but
nk hear me over again? what a strange
its disappointment will many professors
ng meet with at the day of God almighty!
ne a disappointment, I say and that
or as to several things.

1. They will look to escape hell, &
y yet fall juſt into the mouth of hell!
- what a disappointment will here be.

2. They will look for heaven but
e the gate of heaven will be ſhut againſt
- them! what a disappointment is here?

3. They will expect, that Chriſt
f ſhould have compaſſion for them, but
s will finde that he hath ſhut up all
bowels of compaſſion from them!
what a disappointment is here?

Again, fifthly, As this diſappoint-
ment will be fearful, ſo certainly it
will be very full of amazement.

1. Will it not amaze them to be
unexpectedly excluded from life and
ſalvation? G 4 2. Will

2. Will it not be amazing to them to see their own madness and folly, while they consider how they have dallyed with their own souls, and took lightly for granted, that they had that grace that would save them but hath left them in damnable state.

3. Will they not also be amazed one at another, while they remember how in their life time, they counted themselves fellow-heirs of life. To allude to that of the prophet : *they shall be amazed one of another, their faces shall be as flames. Isa. 13. 8.*

4. Will it not be amazing to some of the damned *themselves*, to see some come to *bell* that then they shall see come *thither*. To see preachers of the word; professors of the word, practisers in the word, to come *thither* ; what wondring was there among *them* at the fall of the king of *Babylon*, since he thought to have swallowed up all because he was run down by the *Medes* and *Persians*, how art thou fallen from heaven *Lucifer*,
Isa.

son of the morning? how art thou cut down to the ground that didst weaken the nations? If such a thing as this, will with amazement, surprize the damned, what an amazement will it be to them to see such an one as he, *whose head reached to the clouds*: to see him come down to the pit, and perish for ever like his own dung. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming, it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth.* Isa. 14. they that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee and consider thee, saying, *is this the man?* Is this he that professed and disputed, and forsook us, but now he is come to us again? is this he that separated from us, but how is he fallen with us into the same eternal damnation with us?

Sixthly, yet again, one word more, if I may awaken professors 1. consider, though the poor carnal world, shall certainly perish, yet they will want these things to aggravate their sorrow which thou wilt meet within every

every thought that thou wilt have of the condition thou wast in when thou wast in the world.

1. They will not have a profession to bite them when they come thither.

2. They will not have the taste of a lost heaven, to bite them when they come thither.

3. They will not have the thoughts of, *I was almost at heaven*, to bite them when they come thither.

4. They will not have, the thoughts of, how they cheated saints, Ministers, Churches, to bite them, when they come thither.

5. They will not have the dying thoughts of false faith, false hope, false repentance, and false holyness to bite them when they come thither.

I was at the gates of heaven, I looked in to heaven, I thought I should have entered into heaven ! O how will these things sting ! they will, if I may call them so, be the sting of the sting of death in hell fire.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Give me leave now in a word, to give you a little advice.

1. Doeſt thou love thine own ſoul, then pray to Jeſus Chriſt for an awakned heart, for an heart ſo awakned, with all the things of another world, that thou maielt be allured to Jeſus Chriſt.

2. When thou comelt there, beg again for more awaknings about ſin, hell, grace, and about the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

3. Cry alſo for a ſpirit of diſcerning, that thou maiſt know that which is ſaving-grace indeed.

4. Above all ſtud'ies, apply thy ſelf to the ſtudy of thoſe things, that ſhew thee the evil of ſin, the ſhortneſs of mens life, and which is the way to be ſaved.

5. Keep company with the moſt godly among profeſſors.

6. When thou heareſt what the nature of true grace is, defer not to aſk thine own heart, if this grace be there; and here take heed,

1. That

1. That the preacher himself be sound, and of good life.

2. That thou takest not seeming graces for real ones, nor seeming fruits for real fruits.

3. Take heed that *a sin and thy life goes not unrepented of*, for that will make a *flaw* in thine *evidence*, a *wound* in thy *conscience*, and a *breach* in thy *peace*, and an hundred to one if at last, it doth not drive all the grace in thee into so dark a corner of thy heart, that thou shalt not be able, for a time, by all the torches that are burning in the Gospel to finde it out to thine own comfort and consolation.

F I N I S.